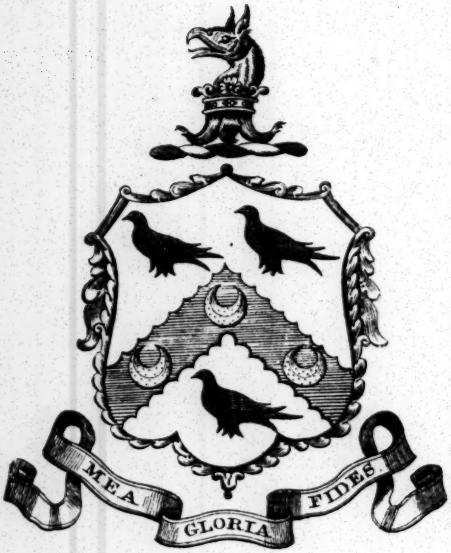
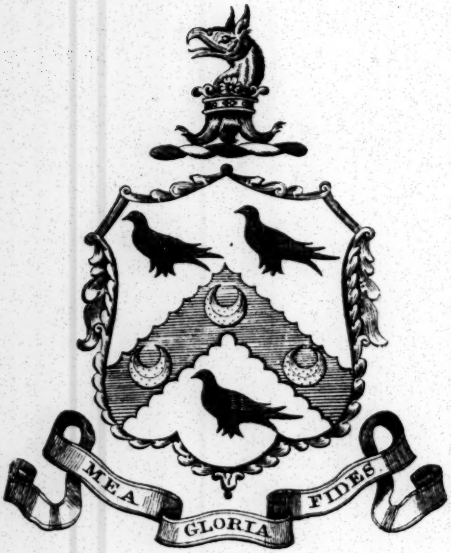


Frederick Elwin Watson.



Frederick Elwin Watson.

These short Expositions are uncommonly sensible, and display very considerable capacity for explaining the Bible. They are part of the plan of expounding the Scriptures which was formed by Dickson, Hutcheson & Ferguson, & in which they all performed a part, though it was never completed. They give a favorable view of the state of public instruction during a much misrepresented part of Scotch History. Their Authors if not profound Critics, & even Men of elegant taste, were by no means deficient in learning & good sense. They were able Ministers of the New Testament, & well qualified for rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

Crime.

A

A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF The EPISTLES of PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS AND COLOSSIANS.

By JAMES FERGUSSON, Miniſter at *Kilwinning*.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

And without controverſie, great is the myſterie of godlineſſe: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

John 17. 3.

And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom Thou haſt ſent.

LONDON:
Printed for the Company of STATIONERS,
Anno Dom. 1656.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

E do offer unto thy view in the following Expoſition, an Eſſay of a Reverend Brother, the Author of this Piece, toward the opening up of two parcels of the holy Scriptures, in ſuch a way as both the ſenſe and uſe thereof may be given ſo briefly as may be. And albeit he did after much entreaty, ſcarcely permit theſe firſt fruits to appear in publick: Yet we are not afraid (being well acquainted with him) to recommend it to thy favourable acceptance: And are confident that thou wilt finde in it, that meaſure of ſolidity and ſweetneſſe, joyned with perſpicuity and briefneſſe, as may help thee to converſe more profitably with God, ſpeaking in his Word to his Church, and excite thee to bleſſe God for him, and the pains he hath taken for thy good: We hope alſo that by thy acceptance hereof, he ſhall be encouraged to give further proof of the Gift and Grace

of God in him, by opening more of that precious Treaſure; Yea, and that others alſo may be thereby invited to put their hand to ſo neceſſary and uſefull a work upon the whole, (or, at leaſt, the moſt difficult and moſt profound) Scriptures, That ſo the Lords People (whoſe callings and neceſſary affairs do force them to make moſt uſe of this brief way of writing) in their ordinary reading and meditation on the Scriptures, may have an eaſie help, ready at hand, to furniſh them with matter of meditation, and direction for their uptaking and applying of the Scriptures, according as their duty and preſent caſe may require: And this, We ſay, without prejudice to thoſe, whoſe ability to buy, and leaſure to read, ſhall ſuffer them to make uſe of other larger Commentaries of holy and learned men. But howſoever, This way of brief Expoſition of Scripture, among other means, We humbly conceive may prove a profitable help to propagate the knowledge of the Goſpel, and to vindicate the truth of the Religion profeſſed in this Iſland, when men, even of an ordinary capacity, ſhall ſee that We profeſſe in Our CONFESSION OF FAITH nothing, but what immediately riſeth from the text of Scripture, and what is very often confirmed and inculcate therein. As the Lords ſtirring up of his Servants to lay out their talents in this and the like way, for the good of his People, is unto us a token for good in theſe

times

times of ſo great diſtemper; So the improving and making uſe of theſe means would yet further confirm all the lovers of Sion, that notwithſtanding all that We have met with, yet there is hope Our provoked Lord will dwell among us, and continue the courſe of his mercy toward this Iſland: We ſay, provoked Lord, *becauſe as it is obvious to the obſervation of all the Godly on the one hand, with what tenderneſſe and loving kindneſſe the Lord doth follow his proceſs and pleading of his controverſie with his Church in theſe Iſlands, for our ſlighting of Chriſt, and of the offer of ſo rich grace in Him; and how He ſeaſoneth our ſad afflictions, by continuing of the Goſpel preached, and by ſtirring up His faithful Servants, ſpecially in* ENGLAND, *by their godly and learned Writings, to ſtrengthen all who are on the way toward Him, and to reclaim others from their wandrings; So it's too too manifeſt on the other hand how openly He is provoked by the great abuſe of theſe mercies; and that the more we are corrected, we revolt daily more and more: for, by how much more light doth break forth, men love darkneſſe and follow it ſo much the more. Whence it is that Atheiſm, Irreligion and Profanity do every where abound, and that the Lord (juſtly recompencing men's wantonneſs of wit, love of their luſts more than of God, and their not receiving the love of the truth) hath let looſe ſo many errors and deluſions, and*

given

given up ſo many to be miſled thereby. All which, as they ought not to be lightly look'd upon, but as grievous ſins, and ſad puniſhments of ſin; So they ought to ſtir up all thoſe, who would approve themſelves to be his hidden ones, to mourn in ſecret, and to ſtand in the gap, leſt theſe evils come to a greater height, and ripen us for yet ſadder plagues, if we do not entertain more heartily, and improve the light, while we have it, more diligently. And for our encouragement, we may be confident, that the Lord, who knows how to be good to ſuch as ſeek Him, in the worſt of times, whatever may befall the Lords People for a ſeaſon, ſhall make Truth ſtill at laſt to triumph; And that the Labours of His Servants ſhall not be loſt, nor their expectation periſh for ever. We ſhall detain thee (Chriſtian Reader) no longer in the entry, but requeſting Him from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, that He would fit and incline many moe to put hand to this Work, and would bleſs this little Piece and the like means, to thy eternal welfare. We remain in Him,

Thine, to ſerve thee in the Goſpel,

From *Edinburgh*, *June* 15. 1656.

DAVID DICKSON,

GEORGE HUTCHESON.

A BRIEF EXPOSITION

Of the Epistle of PAUL to the PHILIPPIANS.

The ARGUMENT.

PAUL *having planted a Church at* Philippi, *a City in* Macedonia, *Act.* 16. 12. *And now understanding by their Minister* Epaphroditus, *that they remained constant in the Doctrine of the Gospel, although under some hazard of seduction by false Teachers, he writeth this Epistle unto them; the scope whereof, is, To excite them unto constancy, and further progress in faith and piety (having removed the scandal which might arise from his present sufferings) Chap.* 1. *And particularly to the study of humility and unity, Chap.* 2. *And to beware of false teachers, Chap.* 3. *After which, he exhorteth them, to the practice of some Christian vertues, commending them for their benevolence: And so concludeth the Epistle with some salutations, and his Apostolical benediction, Chap.* 4.

CHAP. I.

THis Chapter hath three parts: In the first whereof (after the Inscription, ver. 1, 2.) he exciteth, and encourageth them to constancy and progresse in faith and piety; partly, by shewing the good esteem which he had of them, manifested by his praying to God, and blessing him for them, ver. 3,4. and that because of their con-

conſtant good carriage ſince their firſt embracing of the Goſpel, ver. 5. and becauſe of his perſwaſion of their perſeverance, grounded on Gods ſaving work of grace begun in them, ver. 6. the evident ſigns of which grace he perceived in them, ver. 7. which made him ſincerely love them, ver. 8. And partly by his ſeeking growth in grace from God to them, ver. 9, 10, 11.

In the ſecond part of the Chapter, leſt his preſent affliction might prove a ſtumbling-block in their way, he ſheweth, that the Goſpel had gained much by his ſufferings already, to ver. 19. That it ſhould have no loſſe, but advantage thereby in time coming, to ver. 25. And that he was very confident that his trouble ſhould have an happy iſſue, in his deliverance from impriſonment, for their future benefit, to ver. 27.

In the third part of the Chapter, he exhorteth them to conſtancy and unity, ver. 27. And to courage under ſufferings, by ſeveral arguments, unto the end of the Chap.

Verſ. 1. Paul *and* Timotheus *the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, to all the Saints in Chriſt Jeſus, which are at Philippi, with the Biſhops and Deacons.*

IN this verſe is the Inſcription, declaring who was the Author of this Epiſtle, together with the joynt aſſerter of the Truths contained in it, and to whom it was written. *Doct.* 1. Chriſtian ſobriety doth teach us to ſpeak ſparingly of our own credit and authority, except when weighty reaſons do urge thereto: for, although *Paul* doth deſign himſelf often from his office of Apoſtleſhip, when he writeth to theſe Churches where his Apoſtolical authority was queſtioned (1 *Cor.* 1. 1. compared with 1 *Cor.* 9. 1, 2.) yet here he doth it not: becauſe theſe Philippians did not call his Apoſtleſhip in queſtion. 2. Unity and concord among Miniſters in giving joynt teſtimony to the ſame Truths, doth adde a weight unto what they preach, in the eſteem of their hearers: for, *Paul* joyneth *Timothy* with himſelf in the In-

Inſcription of the Epiſtle, that the Truths contained in it, appearing to be atteſted by them both, might have the more weight with the Philippians; *Paul and Timotheus.* 3. Preachers of the Goſpel are in a ſpecial manner the Servants of Chriſt, as being wholly dedicate, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. and perpetually, (*Luke* 9. 62.) aſtricted to his more immediate ſervice: As ſervants were of old to their maſters, ſo were *Paul* and *Timotheus the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt.* 4. It is abundant credit, and doth commend a man ſufficiently unto thoſe who really are Chriſts, that he is known to be a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt: for, *Paul* ſeeketh, and expecteth to be had in due regard for this, That he and *Timotheus* were *ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt.* 5. The whole bulk of thoſe viſible Churches, unto whom the Apoſtles did write, is deſigned by the name of *Saints:* partly, becauſe ſome among them, and thoſe the better, though uſually not the greater part, were really Saints, and inherently holy, *Rev.* 3. 4. for whoſe cauſe the whole Community are called *Saints*: partly, becauſe it is the duty of every one within the Church, and the end of their calling, to be holy, *Levit.* 11. 44. and partly, becauſe all and every one within the viſible Church, are federally and externally holy; in ſo far as God, by entering Covenant with them, hath ſeparated them from other people, as dedicated unto him for his worſhip and ſervice: So whole *Iſrael* is ſaid to be ſanctified, *Exod.* 31. 13. and the child procreate of parents, whereof one is a Believer, is called *holy*, to wit, by this external and federal holineſs, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. And thus *Paul*, writing here to the viſible Church, calleth them *Saints at Philippi.* 6. As, to make a man internally and ſpiritually holy, it is neceſſary he be in Jeſus Chriſt, united to him, and drawing influence from him by faith, *Joh.* 15. 5. So to make a man externally holy, to be called and eſteemed federally holy, as every member of the viſible Church is ſaid to be holy, and in Chriſt, requireth a viſible and externall union with Chriſt, conſiſting in external covenanting and ſerious profeſſing of Truths relating to him; the effect of

which union is the communication of common gifts, unto every one according to his meaſure, 1 *Cor.* 12. 6, &c. for this cauſe the Apoſtle here calleth all the profeſſed Chriſtians in Philippi, *Saints in Chriſt Jeſus.* See *John* 15. 2. which ſuppoſeth ſome to be in Chriſt, to wit, in the way preſently mentioned, who yet may be found fruitleſſe, and conſequently unregenerate. 7. The dignity and parts of a Miniſter, or of any Church-Officer, do not exempt him from a neceſſity of being taught, exhorted, reproved and comforted: for, *Paul* directeth this Epiſtle (wherein he teacheth, exhorteth, &c.) as to the people, ſo to the Church-officers; *to Biſhops and Deacons.* 8. The Biſhops mentioned in Scripture, are nothing elſe but ordinary Paſtors, and Overſeers of particular Flocks, of whom many might be, and were in one City, ſuch as Philippi; which could not have been, if they had been truſted with the actual overſight of many Congregations, and of whole Provinces, as is now alleaged by thoſe who diſtinguiſh betwixt Biſhops and Paſtors, and make them Office-bearers of a higher degree in the Church: for the Epiſtle is directed to the *Biſhops at Philippi.* 9. As the Lord Chriſt hath appointed ſome Office-bearers in his Houſe for the overſight of the ſouls of his people, as Miniſters, and Elders, here deſigned by the name of *Biſhops*, or Overſeers; ſee *Act.* 20. 17. compared with ver. 28. So he hath appointed others, to take inſpection of their bodily neceſſities, that thoſe who are indigent may be ſupplied by their care, and the charity of the Flock, who are here called *Deacons.* See *Act.* 6. 1, &c.

Verſ. 2. *Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

He ſaluteth them moſt Chriſtianly, by wiſhing unto them *Grace*, that is, Gods favour, as the fountain; and *Peace*, that is, peace with God, peace with their own conſcience, peace one with another, and all ſort of proſperity, as ſtreams flowing from that fountain: and all this

this he ſeeketh from God through vertue of the merit and interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt. *Doct.* 1. Gods grace and favour is the root and fountain, from which, peace with God, with our own conſcience, and all ſanctified proſperity, and peace among our ſelves, do flow: for, all thoſe are underſtood here by *peace*, which *Paul* wiſheth unto them as the fruits of Gods grace, joyning *Grace and Peace*. 2. In ſeeking things needful from God, we would look unto him, not as ſtanding diſaffected to us and at a diſtance from us, but according to the neareſt relations, which we can reckon our ſelves to have unto him: So *Paul* eyeth God as his and their father, reconciled through Chriſt; *from God our Father*. 3. Whatſoever cometh from God to Believers, is conveyed unto them by vertue of Chriſts merit, (whereby he hath purchaſed all things for them, *Iſa.* 53. 5.) and of his interceſſion, whereby he applieth his purchaſe unto them, *Heb.* 7. 25. Whence it is, that he asketh from God the Father, but *through Jeſus Chriſt*.

Verſ. 3. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,*
4. *Alwayes, in every prayer of mine, for you all, making requeſt with joy.*

The Apoſtl's ſcope being to excite thoſe Philippians unto conſtancy, and further progreſſe in faith and piety, doth for this end wiſely make known the good eſteem which he had of them, in ſo far, that whenſoever they came to his remembrance, which was very frequently, and eſpecially in prayer, he was conſtrained not only to pray, but to bleſſe the Lord for them. *Doct.* 1. It ſhould be the frequent ſubject of a Miniſters thoughts to obſerve how the work of God doth thrive among his Flock: So was it with *Paul*: for, ſaying, *upon every remembrance of you*, it is certain he had many remembrances of them. 2. When a faithful Miniſter ſeeth the people of his charge thriving by Gods bleſſing upon his labours amongſt them, it muſt needs be to him the matter of much joy and

thankſgiving, how ſad ſoever his caſe be otherwiſe: So the Philippians profiting maketh *Paul* (though a priſoner) glad; *making requeſt with joy.* 3. Then is our joy for things comfortable and pleaſant unto us, rightly expreſſed, when it runs out in praiſes and thankſgiving unto God: for, ſo doth *Paul* expreſſe his joy; *I thank my God.* 4. Then will a man the more chearfully bleſſe the Lord for favours beſtowed upon others, when he looketh upon God as reconciled to himſelf: for, hereby *Paul* is helped not a little to give thanks, when he looketh upon God, as his God; *I thank my God.* 5. As a Miniſter ſhould rejoyce for ſpiritual favours already beſtowed upon his Flock; So alſo he ſhould pray for what is inlacking: for, *Paul* doth both; *making requeſt with joy.*

Verſ. 5. *For your fellowſhip in the Goſpel from the firſt day until now.*

He giveth reaſons for his joy on their behalf: whereof the firſt, is, Their embracing the Goſpel (whereby they were brought unto fellowſhip with Chriſt and his Church) and that ſo readily after the firſt preaching thereof amongſt them; together, with their conſtancy therein unto that very time. *Doct.* 1. There is a real fellowſhip and communion, which thoſe who embrace the Goſpel have one with another, 1 *Joh.* 1. 7. and all of them with Chriſt, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. which conſiſteth in thoſe nigh relations, and the exerciſe of mutual duties founded upon theſe relations, under which one of them ſtandeth toward another, 1 *Cor.* 12. 25. and all of them towards Chriſt, and Chriſt towards them, *Revel.* 3. 20. Hence he calleth their embracing of the Goſpel, *their fellowſhip in the Goſpel.* 2. That a people, or perſon doth readily aſſent to the call of the Goſpel, and remaineth conſtant in the profeſſion of, and obedience unto it, is matter of thankſgiving and praiſe unto God: for, this was *Paul's* joy for thoſe Philippians; *even their fellowſhip in the Goſpel from the firſt day until now.* 3. It is not fit

fit that any man, especially a Minister, should boast much of the reality of grace in any upon a profession newly taken up, until after a times trial, it be seen how the person holdeth up in his profession, by walking equally in the latitude of duties, and constantly in variety of cases and conditions, lest haply he be afterwards ashamed of his confidence: Therefore, *Paul* doth not boast much of those Philippians, untill he take some proof of them; *from the first day until now.*

Vers. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

A second reason of his joy, was, The confidence which he had of their perseverance in grace unto the end, and of their being carried on by the same power, which did begin the work of grace in them. This he speaketh unto the whole Church, not as if every one in it, to his certain knowledge, in the judgment of infallible verity, had been truly gracious; But, because in the judgment of charity (which supposeth the best, where it hath any probable appearance, and no evidence to think otherwaies) he found it equitable to think so of all, especially, being perswaded that there were many such among them, in whom only this and the like expressions were verified, which were spoken generally unto all. See 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. compared with Chap. 11. 21. *Doct.* 1. They who have received grace, shall never totally lose it, but undoubtedly persevere therein to the end: for, *Paul* is *confident of this very thing*, to wit, Of their perseverance. 2. The certainty of the Saints perseverance, is not grounded upon the stability of their resolutions, *Psalm.* 73. 2. nor yet upon the stability of gracious habits in themselves, *Rev.* 3. 2. But upon the power of God, which is engaged for their preservation against all opposition: for, the ground of his confidence is, that God is engaged for the thing; *He who hath begun a good work in you, will*

perform it. 3. The work of grace is not perfected at the firſt, but hath its own beginings, progreſſe, and accompliſhment at death; *He that hath begun, will perform it until the day of Chriſt.* 4. The whole progreſſe of this work, from the firſt ſtep unto the laſt, is all from God, and from no power of our own free-will; *He who hath begun, will perform.* 5. Albeit grace in Believers will be perfected at the time of their death, *Heb.* 12. 23. when their ſoul ſhall be preſented before Chriſt their Judge, and carried up to be with him; yet the compleat conſummation of their bleſſed eſtate in ſoul and body is reſerved till Chriſts ſecond coming, wherein he ſhall raiſe up their bodies in an incorruptible eſtate, unite them to their ſouls, and carry up the whole man with him, to put on the capeſtone on that work of grace begun here: for this cauſe, ſaith he, *He will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt*, not only of their particular judgment, but ſpecially of his ſecond coming.

Verſ. 7. *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, becauſe I have you in my heart, in as much as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Goſpel, ye all are partakers of my grace.*

A third reaſon of his bleſſing God for them, clearing and confirming the former, is, He conceived himſelf bound to judge of them all as truly gracious, and ſuch as ſhould perſevere unto the end, by reaſon of his hearty affection towards them; which, together with his judgement of them flowing from it, was grounded upon the evident ſigns of grace in them (the ſame grace for kind, which he himſelf had) in ſo far, as they had in a ſpecial manner owned him and in their own ſphear joyned with him both in his ſufferings & actings for the defence and confirmation of the Goſpel. *Doct.* 1. Where ſincere love is among Chriſtians, there will be a communion of prayers, praiſes, and of good hopes: for, from this that *he had them in his heart*, he inferreth, *it was meet*, or, juſt *for him* to do all

all the foresaid duties for them. 2. That which knitteth the hearts of Christians in the straitest tie of mutual love, is, not so much carnal respects and natural relations, (2 *Cor.* 5. 16.) as the real evidences of Gods grace in the person loved: for, *Paul had them in his heart*, because they were *partakers of his grace*. 3. Albeit no precept, or practice in the whole Scripture, doth evince, That visible Churches are to be constitute of those only, who ought to be accounted truly gracious by discerning Christians; (*Matth.* 13. 28, 29, 30.) Yet this impedeth not, but the Gospel hath been so far blessed in some places, as that the whole members of some particular Churches, by their godly and sober conversation, have given positive evidences of true grace in them, even to very discerning Christians; and that the Gospel may have the same effects in some particular Churches is yet possible: So *Paul* thinks it meet to judge of them all at Philippi, as truly gracious, to wit, all who were of age; *It is meet for me to think this of you all*. 4. The judgment which one Christian passeth upon the inward gracious estate of another, is not alwaies according to the verity and truth of the thing; but it is grounded upon, and flowing from charity, which hopeth the best in things which are uncertain, (1 *Cor.* 13. 7.) and so may be deceived: Thus *Paul* doth not affirm positively that they were all gracious, only it was meet for him to judge so of them, and that because of his charity and affection towards them, which did, and justly might, preponderat with his judgment in the present case; *because I have you in my heart*, saith he. 5. There must be some positive, though not infallible, evidences, of the inward work of grace in a person, before we can warrantably pass a judgment, even from charity, upon him as truly gracious: for, *Paul* groundeth his charity upon such evidences; *in so much as both in my bonds, &c.* 6. It is the part of each professor, to avow, support, speak for, joyn with, and by all lawful means defend those who are suffering for the truth of the Gospel, or employed any other way for the defence or confirmation thereof; for, they

they were *partakers with him, both in the defence and confir-mation of the Goſpel.* 7. When a perſon, living other-wiſe without offence, is zealous for the Truth of God owning thoſe who do ſuffer for it, contributing his ut-termoſt to uphold it, even when the powers of the world would bring it down, and doth not draw back for fea of any hazard; it is ground ſufficient for *Charity* to judg of that perſon, as truly gracious: for, *Paul* thinketh i meet to judge ſo of thoſe Philippians, becauſe they own-ed him, *both in his bonds, and confirmation of the Goſpel.*

Verſ. 8. *For God is my record, how greatly I long after yo all, in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt.*

He confirmeth what he ſpoke (ver. 7.) of his ſincer love towards them, by taking God to witneſſe, hov much he was affected towards them with a truly Chri-ſtian love. *Doct.* 1. The moſt ſecret inclinations, an motions of our inward affections, are plain and nake before God: otherwaies *Paul* would not have appeale unto him as witneſſe of the ſincerity of his love and affe-ction, ſaying, *God is my record.* 2. The taking of a Oath, or appealing to God the ſearcher of hearts, as witneſſe to the truth of what we affirm, is not unlawful but in ſome caſes a duty: for, *God is my record,* ſaith *Paul* 3. Though the taking of an oath be lawful in ſome caſes yet not for every trivial buſineſſe, but for grave an weighty cauſes: for, here *Paul* doth it for a weighty cauſe, even to procure and facilitate this peoples attentio to the Goſpel, and to ſecure the ſucceſſe of his pain among them, as appeareth from the ſcope, in order t which he perſwadeth them of his hearty affection: for ſaith he, *God is my record, how greatly I long, &c.* 4. Th mutual love of Chriſtians ſhould not be carnal, fo ſelfiſh and worldly reaſons and ends only, but ſpiritual A love like unto Chriſts for fervency and ſincerity; love, whereof Chriſt is the author, and having Chriſt honour and the ſpiritual good of thoſe who are loved fo

it

its main ground, motive and end: for, that is to love *in the bowels of Christ*. 5. Christian love among Christians, doth evidence it self much in Christian fellowship, as occasion offereth: for, in place of saying, *how he loved them*, he saith, *how he longed for them*, as desiring to evidence his love that way, if he had opportunity.

Vers. 9. *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.*

He exciteth them yet more unto further progresse, by seeking those things from God to them, wherein he would have them to advance and grow; as namely, Love to God and their neighbour, together with knowledge, and the spiritual sense or tastings of Gods goodnesse and love: for, the word rendred *judgment*, doth also signifie spiritual sense and experimental knowledge. *Doct.* 1. There can be no such measure of grace attained, but further progresse ought to be endeavoured: for, he prayeth that those Philippians (whose graces he hath presently commended) *may abound more and more*. 2. Love unto God and our neighbour, especially unto those who are Gods, is so necessary, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1. so comprehensive, *Matth.* 22. 37, 39. and meeteth with so many things to extinguish it, *Matth.* 24. 12. that we are not easily to be satisfied with a small measure of that grace: for he prayeth, *that their love may abound*. 3. Such love and zeal are commendable and to be sought after, as have a proportional measure of knowledge going along with them: for he prayeth here, *that their love may abound in*, or, with *knowledge*. 4. There is a spiritual sense and experimental knowledge, whereby we find what Scripture speaketh of Gods goodnesse verified in our selves: for, so much is understood here by *all judgment*, or, sense. 5. This sense and experimental knowledge, would be sought after, as the most effectual mean to beget, entertain and encrease the love of God in those who are his: for he prayeth, that their love *may abound in*, or, with *sense*.

Vers.

Verſ. 10. *That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be ſincere, and without offence till the day of Chriſt:* 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the glory and praiſe of God.*

Here four ends are ſubjoyned; for attaining whereof, he would have them abounding in the three fore-mentioned graces. 1. That they might be endued with a ſpirit of diſcerning betwixt Truth and Error, right and wrong: for, ſo the former part of ver. 10. is to be read, *that ye may try things that differ*: of which trial, *the approving of things that are excellent*, (as the word is rendered in our Bibles) is the commendable effect. 2. That they might be ſincere without any mixture of ſinful byaſſe in their choice of things after trial. 3. That they might be kept from being occaſions of ſtumbling unto others, ver. 10. And, 4. That they might abound in good works undertaken and gone about in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and tending to Gods glory as their main ſcope, verſ. 11. *Doct.* 1. That a Chriſtian may be throughly fitted to judge of things controverted, there is more required than notional light in the brain, to wit, Practice according to what he already knoweth, and ſome experimental knowledge and taſte of divine Truths in his own heart: for, the Apoſtle, *with knowledge*, requireth, *abounding in love and ſenſe*, that ſo they *might try thoſe things which differ*. See *Heb.* 5. 14. 2. Such knowledge as enableth a man to diſcern betwixt Truth and Error, right and wrong, is then worthy to be ſought after, when ſincerity in chooſing what is right, and rejecting of what is wrong, is joyned with it: for, he conjoyneth thoſe two, *Ye may diſcern things that differ, and be ſincere.* 3. It ſhould be one of our main deſires, (whatever be our wreſtlings with corruption within our ſelves) that yet it may not break forth to the offence of others: So *Paul* prayeth, that *they may be without offence.* 4. No ſhorter term ought to be aſſigned unto our growth and daily progreſs in holineſs than the day of our death; for, then, and not till then,

then, ſhall grace be compleated, *Heb.* 12. 23. Thus he prayeth, they may abound more and more, *unto the day of Chriſt*; that is, Either the day of every mans death, ſo called, becauſe of the particular ſentence or judgment, which is paſſed by Chriſt upon every man immediatly after death, *Luke* 12. 20. and 23. 43. or, the day of Chriſts ſecond coming, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 2. And this he will have the term-day of their endeavour to continue ſincere and without offence: becauſe the final and open acquittance of the Elect from ſin and miſery ſhall be reſerved until then, *Matth.* 25. 33, 34. 5. It is not ſufficient for Chriſtians to walk without offence, by abſtaining from what is groſly evil; but they muſt alſo ſet about the doing of what is good: *being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs.* 6. It is not the doing of one good work, or of ſome few, which will ſufficiently evidence a man to be righteous, except he aim at the conſtant practice of every thing which is good: for, that is to be *filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs*, or with good works, whereby the ſincerity of our righteouſneſſe is tried, as the tree by the fruits, *Luke* 6. 44, 45. 7. That a work be truly good, or, a fruit of righteouſneſſe, it is neceſſary that the work be done by one who is in Chriſt by faith, and by vertue of ſtrength drawn from Chriſt: for, theſe fruits required *are by Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, by ſtrength drawn from him: which preſuppoſeth the perſon to be ingrafted in him, *Joh.* 15. 4. 8. It is neceſſary alſo for a good work, That the doer of it have Gods glory for his main ſcope, and not vain glory, credit, or any by-reſpect: otherwiſe he is an empty vine, bringing forth fruit unto himſelf, *Hoſ.* 10. 1. So they are to be *unto the glory and praiſe of God.*

Verſ. 12. *But I would ye ſhould underſtand, Brethren, that the things which hapned unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Goſpel.*

In the ſecond part of this Chapter, leſt they ſhould have ſtumbled at his preſent ſuffering, and feared leſt there-

thereby the Goſpel ſhould have been totally extinct; he ſheweth, firſt, That the Goſpel had received much advantage already by all thoſe ſad things, which had befallen him. *Doct.* 1. It is the duty of Chriſt's Miniſters, as to forecaſt what may prove a ſtumbling-block in the way of the Lords People, to retard them in their chriſtian courſe; So, by all means to endeavour the removal of it: Thus *Paul* wiſely foreſeeth, and carefully laboureth to remove that offence and diſcouragement, which Chriſtians were apt to take from his ſufferings; *But I would ye ſhould underſtand, &c.* 2. So wiſe and powerful is God in working, that what is intended by adverſaries to obſcure his glory, and to mar his work, He maketh it tend to the further clearing of the one, and promoving of the other; which holdeth chiefly in the ſufferings of his ſervants for Truth, whereby the Lord hath promoved the Goſpel frequently as much as by their preaching: So *Paul's* ſufferings *had fallen out to the furtherance of the Goſpel.* 3. That Truth is a gainer by our ſaddeſt ſufferings, is ſufficient reaſon for contentment under them: for, *Paul* reſteth ſatisfied, and would have others ſatisfied alſo with this, That all his ſufferings *had fallen out to the furtherance of the Goſpel.* 4. The obſerving of the advantage that cometh to the Goſpel by the ſuffering of the Saints for Chriſt's Truth, ſerveth greatly to remove the ſcandal of the croſſe: for this end would the Apoſtle have them *to underſtand that what had befallen him, was for the furtherance of the Goſpel.*

Verſ. 13. *So that my bonds in Chriſt are manifeſt in all the Palace, and in all other places.*

He giveth two evidences, that advantage had come to the Goſpel by his ſufferings: Firſt, his bonds, or the Goſpel which was the cauſe of his bonds, was made famous in *Nero's* Court, and elſ-where, whileas every one almoſt, enquiring after the cauſe of his ſufferings, did learn ſomewhat of Chriſt and the Goſpel by that mean. *Doct.* 1.

That

That the Goſpel getteth entry in the Houſes of Kings and great men, is a great advantage and furtherance to it: for, this he reckoneth as one advantage, even that the Goſpel by his bonds *was manifeſt in all the Palace.* 2. An occaſional report, and general fame of Chriſt and the Goſpel, may, through the bleſſing of God accompanying it, take ſome by the Heart, to whom that report doth come: for, by the very occaſional mentioning of the Goſpel, as the cauſe of *Paul's* ſufferings, ſome were made to enquire and learn ſo much of it, as made them fall in love with it: elſe he would not have thought *the manifeſting of his bonds* had tended *to the furtherance of the Goſpel.*

Verſ. 14. *And many of the Brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the Word without fear.*

A ſecond evidence, is, That contrary to the expectation of enemies, (who concluded that *Paul* one of the chief Apoſtles being put in bonds at *Rome*, no Miniſter ſhould have the courage ever to preach again) many Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, having heard of his conſtancy under ſufferings, were encouraged to ſhake off fear, and preach Chriſt more boldly than ever. *Doct.* 1. The Goſpel, and glad tydings of Salvation through Jeſus Chriſt, is the moſt excellent word that ever ſounded in a loſt ſinners ear: Therefore, it is called, *The Word*, by way of excellency, as if there were no other word beſides worthy of the name. 2. This tendeth much to the furtherance of the Goſpel, when Preachers of it are men of courage, not fearing their own perſonal ſufferings, if ſo they may get Chriſt advanced, and the Goſpel publiſhed: for, this is given as an evidence of the furtherance of the Goſpel, even their *ſpeaking of the Word without fear.* 3. The obſervation of God's upholding others under ſharp ſufferings, ſhould make us couragious in avowing that Truth for which they ſuffer; as knowing, God who helped

helped them, will not be inlacking to us, if we be put ſuffer for the ſame cauſe: for, *the Brethren in the Lo waxed confident by his bonds.* 4. As among all Chriſt ans, ſo chiefly among Miniſters, there is a relation of fra ternity in Chriſt, whereby they are tied to walk as Bre thren; by loving one another, 1 *John* 4. 21. admoniſh ing one another, *Lev.* 19. 17. ſtanding for the juſt cred one of another, *Jam.* 4. 11. and working to the hand on of another, for carrying on the work of their Lord Chriſt 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. Hence they are called, *Brethren in the Lord.*

Verſ. 15. *Some indeed preach Chriſt even of envy and ſtrife and ſome alſo of good will.*

16. *The one preach Chriſt of contention, not ſincerely, ſup poſing to adde affliction to my bonds:*

17. *But the other of love, knowing that I am ſet for th defence of the Goſpel.*

Becauſe it might have been objected, That many o thoſe fore-mentioned Preachers, of whom he boaſted were but naughty men, and ſmall friends to *Paul*; He anſwereth firſt, granting, many indeed did preach Chriſt from a ſpirit of *envy* againſt *Paul*, to out-ſtrip him, and *of contention and ſtrife*, hereby raiſing a ſinful emulation amongſt the Miniſtery, while every one laboured who ſhould have manieſt to applaud him, and from a ma licious purpoſe and deſire to procure harder uſage for *Paul*, if not his death, being now in bonds; ſuppoſing, the more the Goſpel was preached, *Nero* would be the more incenſed againſt him: Yet herein he comforteth himſelf, that all the Preachers were not of that ſtamp, there being many beſides them, who preached Chriſt from *love*, and *good-will* toward Chriſt, and *Paul* his pri ſoner, aiming ſincerely at the good of the Goſpel; for the defence whereof, he was now in bonds. *Doct.* 1. They may preach Chriſt unto others, who are but hol low-hearted men themſelves: for, ſo were thoſe who preached Chriſt, even *of envy and ſtrife.* 2. Such is the

power

power of unmortified corruption, that it will make a mans moſt excellent gifts, and the exerciſe of them in the choiceſt duties of divine worſhip, ſubſervient to his baſeſt luſts: for, *ſome even preached Chriſt out of envy and ſtrife.* 3. The Lord taketh notice, not only of the matter which Miniſters do preach, whether it be Truth or Error; but alſo, of the manner how, the ends for which, and the motives from which they preach: even whether they preach Chriſt *from envy and contention*, or, *from love and good-will*: for, here *Paul* taketh notice of it. 4. An immoderate ſinful deſire after applauſe, together with the luſt of envy becauſe of the gifts and eſtimation of others, is a ſin, whereof thoſe who preach Chriſt are ſometime guiltie: for, here ſome *preach Chriſt out of envy.* 5. The Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt had need to reſiſt the very firſt motions of the fore-mentioned evil; ſeeing, where it is once rooted in the heart, it will make a man proſtitute his parts and gifts; yea, the very preaching of Chriſt, to the ſervice of it: So thoſe of whom the Text ſpeaketh, having once given way to a ſpirit of ſinful emulation againſt *Paul*, they reſt not, until they even *preach Chriſt out of envy.* 6. Where there are ſelf-ſeeking men in the Miniſtery, making a trade of their excellent preaching and other exerciſes of their gifts and parts, (mainly to get themſelves much thought of, and others vilipended) unity cannot long continue in the Church of Chriſt: but, ſuch ſpirits, before they fail of their intent, will rather trample upon the Churches peace: for, thoſe two are conjoyned, they preached Chriſt *out of envy and ſtrife.* 7. Though a man preach Truth, and exalt Chriſt in preaching Truth; yet if he do it from a ſpirit of envy, to get others decryed, and himſelf extolled, he is but an unſincere rotten-hearted hypocrite (notwithſtanding of all his preaching) in Gods ſight: for, thoſe men preached Truth, elſe *Paul* (ver. 18.) would not have rejoyced in their preaching; yet, ſeeing they preached of envy, they are ſpoken of as unſincere, and unfaithful Preachers, who preached *not ſincerely.* 8. Envie, and ſinful emulation, becauſe of the

parts and esteem of others, is a cruel and unsatiable lust, thirsting after the very blood of those against whom they have emulation: for, those men who envied *Paul*, would gladly *have added affliction to his bonds*, and have stirred up *Nero*, by occasion of their preaching, to have taken his life. 9. Though some that preach Christ are but hollow-hearted men, yet all are not so; and the sincerity of those that are honest, is sufficient comfort against those discouragements which might arise from those who are otherwise: for, though some preached Christ out of *envy*; yet *Paul* comforted himself in this, that others *preached of good-will*. 10. This is praise-worthy in a Minister, when he is stirred up to preach from love to Truth, good will to the work, and to Christ whose work it is, endeavouring what in him lieth to encourage all, even the meanest who have their hand at the Work: for, that is here commended, even to *preach Christ of good will and love*, to wit, love to Christ, to Truth, and unto *Paul*. 11. An honest heart will respect those much, whom love to Truth hath brought to any suffering, or hardship: for, therefore did those honest Ministers preach from good will unto *Paul*, *knowing he was set*, or, *did lie* (to wit, in prison) *for the defence of the Gospel*. 12. The sufferings of the Saints for the Gospel, are real preachings, and are speaking apologies and defences for the power and truth of the Gospel: *I am set* (saith *Paul*) *for an apologie of the Gospel*, as the word is in the original.

Vers. 18. *What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoyce,-----*

He giveth a second answer unto that which might have been objected, to wit, Whatever they aimed at in their preaching, yet Jesus Christ was made known by them: and this made him glad. *Doct.* 1. The blessing of the Word preached, doth not depend upon the honestie and saving grace of the Preacher: A graceless Minister

niſter, may (through Gods bleſſing upon his own Truth) be an inſtrument of much good unto others: for, they who preached Chriſt in *pretence* only, pretending love to Chriſt, but really ſeeking their own applauſe, were ſurely doing good unto ſome; elſe *Paul* would never have *rejoyced* ſo much that *Chriſt was preached by them.* 2. The apparent diminution of our own eſteem and credit ought not to be much regarded, if high eſteem of Chriſt be upon the growing hand: *Paul* regarded it not; *notwithſtanding*, ſaith he, that is, though they ſeek to over-ſhadow me, *yet Chriſt is preached, and I rejoyce.* 3. The man whoſe heart is inflamed with love to Chriſt's honour, and the ſalvation of loſt ſinners, ſo as not to value his own particular hazard, being put in the ballance with thoſe, may expect to find much joy and comfort under his ſaddeſt ſufferings: for, *Paul*, being thus diſpoſed, rejoyceth, though in bonds: *I therein do rejoyce.*

Verſ.---18. *yea, and will rejoyce.*

19. *For I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation through your prayer, and the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt.*

That he may yet further prevent their ſtumbling at his ſufferings; he ſheweth, That, as the Goſpel had gained much thereby already, it ſhould gain yet more; and that his joy in that reſpect ſhould not be taken from him; and that, becauſe he knew, partly from Scripture, and partly alſo, as it appeareth, from ſpecial revelation, that *this*, to wit, all the machinations of his adverſaries againſt him, ſhould be ſo ordered of God, as that by the renewed ſupply of furniture from the Spirit of Chriſt, obtained by their prayers, his ſalvation ſhould be advanced by them; where by *ſalvation* we underſtand, not only his eternal well-being, but his conſtancy alſo in avowing Truth, and the preſervation of his temporal life for the time, as he cleareth afterwards: the contrary of both which was aimed at by his envious brethren, their de-

ſign being, as it ſeemeth, either to drive him, through his own fear, unto apoſtaſie from Chriſt, or otherwiſe to incite *Nero* to put him to death. *Doct.* 1. A ſuffering Chriſtian, eſpecially a Preacher, may attain, not only to preſent ſweetneſſe and joy under a bitter croſſe; but alſo to a ſweet ſtrong perſwaſion of the continuance of that joy in the time to come: for, *Paul* not only rejoyceth in the mean time, but alſo confidently reſolveth, *I will rejoyce.* 2. The joy of a Chriſtian under a croſſe is grounded, not only upon good preſently enjoyed and felt, but alſo upon that, which by faith is apprehended as yet to come; ſo *Paul* rejoyceth, and promiſeth to rejoyce, becauſe he knew by faith, that *this ſhould turn to his ſalvation.* 3. So powerfull and wiſe is God in working, that out of the eater he can bring meat, by ordering our ſad afflictions ſo, that our ſalvation both temporal and eternal, ſhall be advanced thereby: thus was it with *Paul*; *I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation.* 4. That Chriſtians are kept conſtant under ſad ſufferings, and made to advance in the way towards ſalvation thereby, proceedeth neither from the nature of the croſſe, nor yet meerly from the power of inherent grace; but chiefly from the actual influence and renewed ſupply of furniture from the Spirit of Chriſt: for, that *this* did turn to his ſalvation, was, *through the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt.* 5. Prayer conſcientiouſly gone about, is an excellent mean for drawing from God through Chriſt the choiceſt of his mercies, not only to our ſelves, but alſo to others, *for whom we pray:* So, *through the prayer* of thoſe Philippians, *ſupply from Chriſt* was to be communicated to *Paul.* 6. They who pray beſt and moſt ſpiritually, are not moſt taken up with the conceit of their own prayers: for, *Paul* imputeth his receipts more to their prayers, than to his own; though none will queſtion but he prayed as much, and as well as any of them: *through your prayers,* ſaith he.

Verſ.

Verſ. 20. *According to my earneſt expectation and my hope, that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed, but that with all boldneſſe, as alwayes, ſo now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.*

Paul's envious adverſaries aimed at two things; either to drive him to apoſtacie, or to incite *Nero* to take his life; and in the preceding Verſe it is ſhowen, that *Paul* knew they ſhould be diſappointed in both theſe: Now he explaineth his knowledg and perſwaſion of their diſappointment in the firſt, and ſheweth the ground of that perſwaſion. His perſwaſion had two parts; the Negative part is, No terrour of fleſh ſhould ever make him deny the truth, as a man aſhamed of it. The Poſitive is, That he ſhould continue in the ſtout avowing of truth, and magnifying of Chriſt, whether he died or lived: The grounds of this his perſwaſion were, hope in Gods Word, his earneſt expectation, flowing from his hope and by-paſt experience. *Doct.* 1. To turn our back upon truth, for eſchewing of ſuffering, ſaith as much, as that we are aſhamed of Chriſt and his truth: and therefore they who do ſo, may expect that Chriſt will be aſhamed of them. See *Luke* 9. ver. 26. hence in place of ſaying, he will not deny truth in any thing, he ſaith, *in nothing I will be aſhamed.* 2. Chriſtians in the caſe of tryall eſpecially, would be very ſtrict and preciſe, ſo as not to recede from the leaſt point of truth or dutie. Thus the Apoſtle reſolveth, *I will be aſhamed in nothing.* 3. The firſt ſtep towards defection is, a declining of, and relenting in the profeſſing and bold avowing of truth, when God calleth us to it: and to avow truth boldly, as occaſion offereth, is a ſoveraigne mean to keep us from being aſhamed of it. For, *Paul* oppoſeth thoſe two, his being *aſhamed* of truth, and his bold *avowing* of it; the latter as preventive of the former: *in nothing I will be aſhamed; but that with all boldneſſe.* 4. The avowing of truth boldly under perſecution, tendeth much to the magnifying of Chriſt his truth, for which

we ſuffer; and his ſtrength which beareth us up under ſufferings, being thereby much commended: Hence he calleth his boldneſſe for truth, under his bodily ſufferings, a magnifying of Chriſt; *ſo now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body.* 5. A Chriſtian is not to heſitate much in the matter of his death or life, if ſo he may get Chriſt magnified by either of them; for, *Paul* ſtandeth not much, if ſo *Chriſt be magnified, whether it be by death or life.* 6. The hope of a Chriſtian, having a word of promiſe for its ground (*Pſal.* 130. ver. 5.) ſhall never be diſappointed: for, *Paul* concludeth all this ſhould turn to his ſalvation, and that he ſhould be carried through under ſufferings, becauſe there being a generall word of Promiſe for it, *Rom.* 8. ver. 28. he hoped in that word; *according to my hope,* ſaith he. 7. Then is our hope of the right ſtamp, and truly Chriſtian, when being founded upon the Word, it exciteth the heart earneſtly, and by all lawfull means to purſue after the thing hoped for; ſo the Apoſtl's hope is joyned with *earneſt expectation*: the word ſignifieth, the expectation of a thing with head and neck ſtretched out, as preſſing to be at it. 8. The frequent experience of Gods being nigh unto us, and honouring of himſelf by us in former tryals, is a ground for hope to reſt upon, that he will not leave us in the preſent ſtrait; ſo *Paul* gathereth preſent confidence from former experience: *that as alwayes, ſo now alſo, &c.*

Verſ. 21. *For to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain.*

He giveth a reaſon of his indifferencie, whether to die, or to live, of which he ſpake, ver. 20. to wit, if his life be prolonged, *unto him to live is Chriſt,* that is, Chriſt was to be the ſcope of his life, he having deſtinated it wholly to his ſervice; but if he die, death ſhould be gain and advantage to him. *Doct.* 1. Then, and in no other caſe, is poor ſilly life worth the having, when the extolling of Chriſt is the main ſcope at which we aim in

our

our life; For, this maketh *Paul* indifferent to live, or not to weary of life: *for unto me to live is Christ*, saith he. 2. Who ever hath dedicated his life to get Christ exalted by it, will find death it self to be great gain and advantage, as being thereby freed from sin and misery, *Rev.* 14. ver. 13. and admitted unto the full injoying of Christ 1. *Cor.* 13. ver. 12. unto all eternitie 1. *Thess.* 4. ver. 17. for, unto *Paul to die is gain*; because *unto him to live* was Christ.

Vers. 22. *But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose, I wot not.*

He explaineth the first member of the preceding verse, shewing, if he should live any longer in this corruptible flesh, *this* or that life should be the *fruit of his labour*, that is, the gaining of souls to God by his labour, should be the scope of his life: and then declareth his former indifferencie to be such, that he knew not whether to choose death or life; though it were given him to his option. *Doct.* 1. The manifold infirmities accompanying this mortall fading life, do not impede the labour of Gods faithfull servants from being fruitfull, in order to the honour of Christ, and good of the Church; the wisdom of God judging it most convenient to commit this heavenly treasure to earthly vessels, and to bring about the great work of saving of souls, not by sinlesse, holy, and uncorruptible Angels, but by poor weak men, who carry about fading flesh as our selves. 2. *Cor.* 4. ver. 7.) So if *Paul* had lived in the flesh, his labours should have had fruit that way: *if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour.* 2. Who ever knoweth ought of a life to come, and of a right unto it, cannot but speak contemptibly of the life which now is, while he compareth the one with the other; so *Paul*, as contemning this life, being compared with that, calleth it, a *living in the flesh*. 3. A man may be so perswaded of a life of glory after death, upon the one hand, and so convinced of

the great advantage, which may come to the Church by the prolonging of his life, upon the other hand, that if to die or live, were given to his wiſh, he could not eaſily determine himſelf, which of them to chooſe: So is it with *Paul*; *what I ſhall chooſe, I wot not*, ſaith he.

Verſ. 23. *For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better:*
24. *Neverthelеſs, to abide in the fleſh, is more needful for you.*

He profeſſeth his ſtrait, ſhewing there were weighty reaſons on both ſides: When he looked on death, therein he ſaw his own particular advantage, even to be ſtill with Chriſt; when he looked upon life, therein he ſaw advantage to the Church, and hence ariſeth his ſtrait what to chooſe, or refuſe. *Doct.* 1. Death is not a deſtruction of the godly, but a ſeparating of the ſoul from the body, a flitting from one place to another, a releaſing of the ſoul from the captivity of the body, wherein it was incloſed, and a ſetting of it at liberty: for, *Paul* maketh uſe of a word to expreſſe death, rendred here to *depart*, which ſignifieth to diſſolve things before conjoyned, to change our abode, or, our dwelling, to ſet ſail for another Country, and to be releaſed from priſon. 2. It is lawfull, yea and in ſome reſpects a duty for Chriſtians, not only frequently to think upon death, but alſo to long after it; for, *Paul hath a deſire to depart*. 3. Then is our longing after death commendable, when it proceedeth not from deſperation, or wearying of the croſſe which God hath laid on (*Jonah* 4. 3, 4.) but from a deſire to be with Chriſt: for, here thoſe are conjoyned. I *deſire to depart* and *to be with Chriſt*. 4. The ſouls of men and women are not annihilated after death, neither do they ſleep until the Reſurrection; nor are they detained by the way from immediate paſſing into glory, if they have been Believers, as the ſouls of others do enter into everlaſting condemnation: for, *Paul* knew nothing of a Purgatory

gatory after death; but he expected presently *to be with Christ.* 5. There is no proportion betwixt the choicest contentments (even those that are spiritual) which can be attained here, and that exceeding weight of glory which the Saints shall enjoy hereafter, the latter doth so far exceed the former: for, *to be with Christ,* saith *Paul, is far better.* 6. Though Christ be present with, and dwell in the hearts of Believers by faith, even while they are here, *Eph.* 3. 17. yet all that presence and nearnesse, is but a distance and kind of absence, being compared with that measure of nearnesse to, and presence with him, which shall be enjoyed hereafter: the former being but mediate, through the glasse of Ordinances, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. frequently interrupted, *Psal.* 30. 7. and no waies full, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. But the latter shall be immediate, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. constant, 1 *Thess.* 4. 17. and so full, that they who shall enjoy the meanest degree, will finde no inlack, *Psal.* 17. 15. for, he saith after his departure, *he will be with Christ,* as if he had never enjoyed his presence until then. 7. The Church of Christ hath much advantage by injoying of faithful Ministers, and suffereth much by their removal; for, *my abiding in the flesh is needful for you,* saith *Paul.* 8. It is only the publick good of the Church, and others of whom we have charge, and not particular contentment which can be enjoyed here, that ought to cast the ballance of our affections towards a desire of having our life prolonged: for, only this hath weight with *Paul,* while he saith, *to abide is more needful for you.*

Vers. 25. *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.*

26. *That your rejoycing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.*

Having shown (ver. 20, &c.) that his adversaries should be disappointed of what they aimed at in the first

palce,

place, which was to drive him unto apoſtaſie; he ſheweth here they ſhould be alſo diſappointed of what they deſigned, in the next place, which was the inciting of *Nero* to take away his life: for, from what he hath preſently ſaid, how uſeful the continuance of his life ſhould be to the Church of Chriſt, and withall having probably a ſpecial revelation of the thing, he expreſſeth at leaſt his confidence (if not his certain perſwaſion) that not only his life for this time ſhould be preſerved, but alſo, that being ſet at liberty, he ſhould come and remain with them; and all this that they might be further promoved in the way to Heaven, eſpecially in the grace of believing, ver. 25. and have more abundant matter of gloriation in Chriſt, having received a new proof of his power, and good will in delivering of *Paul* from death, and ſending him unto them, ver. 26. *Doct.* 1. The Lord in mercy often prolongeth the life of uſeful inſtruments, and keepeth them from Heaven the longer, that the Church may reap advantage by their labours: So *Paul was to abide and continue with them all.* 2. A faithful Miniſter, though he be not tied to ſubmit to the loſſe of Heaven and ſalvation; yet he ought contentedly to ſpare the enjoyment of it for a time, if ſo be his life may do good to the Church of God: for, *Paul* is content upon this accompt that his life be prolonged: *having this confidence, I know I ſhall abide.* 3. God alwaies can, and ſometimes doth ſo calm the rage of perſecutors, that they do not execute the evil by them intended againſt his Servants, whom he ſtill preſerveth and doth deliver from death and bonds, ſo long as he hath work for them: for, ſaith *Paul*, *having this confidence, I know, &c.* His confidence, that he ſhould be delivered, doth import, that God may deliver when he pleaſeth, and that at leaſt, conſidering the preſent poſture of affairs, it was very probable that he ſhould be delivered: If it do not alſo import a certainty of faith, grounded upon ſome particular revelation, that it ſhould be ſo: for, the word moſt frequently ſignifieth an aſſured confidence. See 2 *Tim.* 4. ver. 16, 17, 18. Where *Paul* doth ſeem

to

to inſinuate, that after his firſt captivity and compearance before *Nero*, he was ſet at liberty, and did preach the Goſpel among the Gentiles; though he was afterward apprehended and put to death. 4. They who have received a great meaſure of gifts and graces, and have the opportunity of enjoying the fellowſhip of others, ſhould improve their time and parts, in their place and ſtation, for the ſpiritual advantage of thoſe with whom they converſe: for, ſo doth *Paul* look on his continuance with them, that it ſhould be for *their furtherance*. 5. As there is no grace, wherein Chriſtians ought not to aim at progreſſe and growth, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. So, eſpecially, they would labour to grow in faith, as being that grace, which by it's growth, is cauſe of growth in all other graces; it is the mouth which ſucketh the milk of the Promiſes: and therefore Satan obſtructeth our growth in that grace moſt, *Luk.* 22. 31, 32. Hence the Apoſtle would aim at their growing in this grace eſpecially: *for your furtherance and joy of faith*, ſaith he. 6. As there is a joy of ſenſe, *Job.* 16 24. So there is a joy ariſing from the ſolid ſatisfaction which the heart doth receive from laying hold on Chriſt and the Promiſe, *Pſal.* 60. 6. which is here called the *joy of faith*. 7. The ſeveral inſtances of Chriſts kything his power and good will in the delivery of his Church, or of any particular member thereof from a deſperate ſtrait, ſhould be improved for ſtrengthening of our faith, and increaſe of holy boaſting and gloriation in God: for, *Paul* ſheweth the fruit of his deliverance *ſhould be the furtherance of their faith*, and that their *rejoycing might be more abundantly in Jeſus Chriſt for him*; that is, becauſe of Chriſts power and good will to them, manifeſted in his delivery. 8. Where there is ſympathy with Chriſtian ſufferers under their croſſe, there will be a ſharing with them alſo in all the choice advantages, which are to be obtained by their delivery: for, the Philippians did partake with *Paul* in his bonds, v. 7. and as a fruit hereof, they are to reap much ſpiritual advantage by his delivery from them: *that your rejoycing*

may

may be more abundantly, &c. ſaith he: 9. The more unexpected mercies are, before they come, the more of God will be ſeen in them, and the more of joy in God will be becauſe of them, when they come: for, *Paul* was a gone man in humane appearance, being priſoner at *Rome*, and his delivery almoſt hopeleſſe, and therefore their *rejoycing* was to be the *more abundant in Jeſus Chriſt by his coming to them again.*

Verſ. 27. *Only let your converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt: that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the Goſpel.*

In the third part of the Chapter, he exhorteth them, That whatſoever ſhould befall him, they would minde their duty, by living like the Goſpel: which general exhortation he brancheth forth in two Branches: firſt, That they would maintain Truth with perfect Unity among themſelves in the joynt defence of it, which ſhould be great matter of joy unto him, whether he ſhould come and ſee it, or only hear of it, being abſent. *Doct.* 1. There is nothing concerneth Chriſtians wherewith they ſhould be taken up ſo much, as how to beautifie the Goſpel which they profeſſe, by a holy converſation ſuitable unto it: for this is the only thing he would have them minding; and that more than any thing which concerned him; *Only let your converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel.* 2. As there is nothing which gladdeth a faithful Miniſter more than the holy life of thoſe that are committed unto his charge: So the joy and contentment of an honeſt Miniſter, ſhould be conſcientiouſly ſought after by the people: for, he uſeth this as an argument to incite them to walk as becometh the Goſpel, that his hearing, or ſeeing of it, would make him glad, *that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs*: which words do not neceſſarily import his doubt-

doubtfulneſſe of his coming, contrary to what he ſeemeth to ſpeak, ver. 25. he onely hereby ſheweth. 1. that they were not ſo much to be taken up with that, whether he came or not, as with their own duty. Secondly, how much their living like the Goſpel would refreſh him, ſo that although he ſhould be deprived of that comfort, which he was confident to injoy in their fellowſhip, yet, to hear of their Chriſtian converſation, would refreſh his ſpirit under that want. *Doct.* 3. This is one part of a converſation becoming the Goſpel, to be zealous for truth, ſtanding to, and ſtriving for the defence thereof againſt errour, and unſtability in truth, which reflect as much on the Goſpel, as profanity of life: for *Paul* explaineth this converſation, which becometh the Goſpel, by *ſtanding faſt, and ſtriving for the faith of the Goſpel*, that is, for the doctrine of faith held forth in the Goſpel. 4. It concerneth Gods people much, to be throughly one among themſelves in this conflict for truth againſt error: therefore doth he preſſe them ſo much to be one, while he ſaith, *that ye ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one minde, ſtriving together*; where every word expreſſeth a part of this unity, to wit, union in *ſpirit*, or judgment and opinion; union in *minde* or affection; and union in deſign and endeavour, while they *ſtrive together*.

Verſ. 28. *And in nothing terrified by your adverſaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of ſalvation, and that of God.*

The ſecond branch of living like the Goſpel (which alſo explaineth the firſt) is a ſpirit of courage under ſufferings from the enemies of truth, which he preſſeth from the conſideration of two things, which they might read in their couragious ſufferings, to wit, namely, that their ſo doing, portended deſtruction to enemies, and ſalvation to themſelves. *Doct.* 1. As the people of God have alwayes ſome to be their adverſaries for truth; ſo they may attain to ſuch a high pitch of courage, that the utmoſt of adverſaries malice and rage, will not terrifie them, to

wit,

wit, ſo as to drive them from their duty, or to make them take any ſinfull courſe for their own ſafety, *Nehem.* 6. ver. 11. Therefore are they exhorted to it, as a thing attainable, that they be *in nothing terrified.* 2. Faithleſſe fears and faintings of ſpirit, becauſe of the boaſts and threats of adverſaries, are exceedingly unſutable for thoſe who live under the Goſpel: for this is one part of that converſation, which becometh the Goſpel, to be *in nothing terrified by adverſaries.* 3. The more of ſufferings for truth the people of God are made to under-go, and the more there be of Chriſtian courage, and holy contempt of enemies rage and boaſts under ſufferings, there is the more evidence of delivery unto the Church, and of ruine here and hereafter to her enemies, *which is to them an evident token of perdition.* 4. Chriſtian courage under ſufferings for Chriſt and his truth (which alwayes pre-ſuppoſeth faith in Chriſt, ver. 29.) though it be not meritorious of heaven; yet it evidenceth our right unto it: *but to you of ſalvation.* 5. It is of Gods free grace, and from his ſpeciall diſpoſing, that croſſes and ſufferings for truth (which in themſelves look like diſpleaſure and wrath from the Lord) ſhould contribute any thing unto the ſalvation of the ſufferer, or be a promiſing evidence of it: this much is meant by the laſt words, *and that of God.*

Verſ. 29. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not onely to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake.*

Here is another argument exciting them unto Chriſtian courage under ſufferings for truth, to wit, That nothing was required of them, but what was given unto them: for, as grace to believe in Chriſt, ſo grace to ſuffer couragiouſly for Chriſt, was a part of Chriſts purchaſe for them, and for his ſake to be gifted over unto them. *Doct.* 1. To believe in Jeſus Chriſt, or to ſuffer chriſtianly for him, goeth beyond the reach of naturall ſtrength. It is an honourable gift, and that freely given;

given; *for it is given unto you to believe, and ſuffer*, ſaith he. 2. All favours, eſpecially ſaving graces, are given unto us in behalf of Chriſt, as being purchaſed for us by his merit, *Iſa.* 53. ver. 5. and applyed unto us through vertue of his interceſſion, *Heb.* 7. ver. 25. for, *it is given in behalf of Chriſt.* 3. Faith in Chriſt muſt go before Chriſtian ſuffering for Chriſt: ſo that to ſuffer for him, is of greater importance, and in ſome reſpects more honourable, than ſimply to believe in him; for, he not only ſaith, *it is given to believe*, in the firſt place; and then, *to ſuffer*; but there is a gradation in his ſpeech from the leſſe to the more, *not onely to believe, but alſo to ſuffer.* 4. This may incourage very cowards to be ſtout under Chriſtian-ſufferings, that grace to ſuffer, and all things neceſſary to make us ſuffer aright, are purchaſed unto our hand, and freely given unto us in behalf of Chriſt: for, this is the force of the Argument contained in this verſe: *for unto you it is given, &c.* 5. Then are ſufferings truly Chriſtian, and an evidence of ſalvation, when as the ſufferer is firſt a believer, ſo his ſufferings are for Chriſts ſake, that is, for his truth, as the cauſe for which 1. *Pet.* 3. ver. 14. and from love to him, as the motive from which they ſuffer, 1. *Cor.* 13. 3. *For his ſake.*

Verſ. 30. *Having the ſame conflict which ye ſaw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

He giveth a third reaſon to inforce the ſame duty, to wit, That their ſharpeſt ſufferings would put them in no other condition then that, wherein he himſelf was, as partly they ſaw when he was at Philippi: ſee *Act.* 16. ver. 19, &c. and partly they had heard by the relation of others ſince. *Doct.* 1. Chriſtian-courage under ſufferings for truth, will not be kept up without a battell and conflict; what from a fainting diſcouraged ſpirit within, *Heb.* 12. 12. what from the rage of perſecutors, *Act.* 9. 1. and Gods hiding of his face without, *Pſal.* 44. ver. 24. So *Paul* ſpeaking of his ſufferings, calleth

calleth them, an *agonie* or *conflict*: *having the ſame conflict*. 2. The Lord may for wiſe reaſons leave his moſt precious ſervants to wreſtle under a ſuffering caſe for a long time together; for *Paul* was a ſufferer at Philippi, and continueth to be ſo when he is at Rome, a long time after that: *what ye ſaw in me, and now hear to be in me*. 3. This may adde no ſmall incouragement under ſufferings for truth, that nothing befalleth us, but what is common to men, yea, to the chiefeſt of Chriſts ſervants and Miniſters: for, this is *Paul's* ſcope to incourage thoſe Philippians, becauſe he himſelf was in the ſame caſe with them: *Having the ſame conflict, which ye now hear to be in me*.

CHAP. II.

IN the firſt part of this Chapter, the Apoſtle exhorteth them with much vehemencie, to union and humility, ver. 1, 2. And diſſwadeth from contention and vainglory, ver. 3. and ſelf-love, v. 4. Firſt, from Chriſts example, v. 5. whoſe divine glory before his Incarnation is ſet forth, v. 6. his Incarnation and ſtate of humiliation, v. 7, 8. and his exaltation, v. 9, 10, 11. Secondly, from their by-paſt obedience, v. 12, 13. After which he repeateth the dehortation, v. 14. inforcing it from the advantages which were to follow, v. 15, 16. the laſt whereof, to wit, his joy, ought in reaſon to have much weight with them, v. 17, 18.

In the ſecond part he comforteth them; firſt, by a promiſe of ſending *Timotheus*, v. 19. whom he commendeth unto them, to v. 24. Secondly, by the expreſſion of his hope, that he himſelf ſhould ſee them ſhortly, v. 24. And thirdly, by ſending their own Miniſter *Epaphroditus* unto them preſently, v. 25. and that upon ſeverall weighty reaſons, v. 26, 27, 28. from which he exhorteth them to receive him with all due reſpect, v. 29. and becauſe he had with great pains attended him at their direction, v. 30.

Verſe

Verſ. 1. *If there be therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies;*

2. *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

THe Apoſtle, being to preſſe unity and love, uſeth a moſt vehement exhortation, and a kind of rhetorical adjuration, That if they had ever found by the means of his Miniſtery, or did expect to find any of thoſe conſolations, which are to be had in Chriſt: If they had ever enjoyed, or expected to enjoy any comfort of mutual love and concord among themſelves; If they had ever found any fellowſhip with God, by communication of influence from his Spirit, or, if they would not mar that fellowſhip for the time to come; If they had any pity or compaſſion upon him a priſoner for Chriſt; He obteſteth them by all thoſe, and as they would give proof of all thoſe, ſo they would compleat the begun joy which he had in them, by their unity and concord among themſelves, which he ſetteth forth in four diverſe expreſſions, to be diſtinguiſhed thus. The firſt, *that ye be like-minded*, ſignifieth in general, their unity in judgment, love, affection, and action: which is ſub-divided in the three particulars following. The ſecond, *having the ſame love*, expreſſeth unity of will and mutual affections. The third, unity of deſign and endeavours. The fourth, unity in judgment and opinion. *Doct.* 1. The moſt famous, and praiſ-worthy Churches have their own failings and infirmities: So this Church, though highly commended, Chap. 1. yet hath had their own differen[illegible] alienation of minds, renting of affections, and ca[illegible] tions flowing from their differences, as appeareth [illegible] this vehement exhortation to concord and unity. 2. [illegible] unity and concord is neceſſary in it ſelf, and at all times: (Hence the Apoſtle doth ſo earneſtly preſſe them unto it) So it is moſt neceſſary and comfortable, eſpecially in ſuffering-times: Therefore the Apoſtle, having ſpo-

ken in the cloſe of the former Chapter, of thoſe ſufferings which they were to undergo for Chriſt and Truth, inferreth as a concluſion from thence this exhortation unto unity, *If there be therefore, &c.* 3. As they who have received any ſpiritual good from Jeſus Chriſt, by the Miniſterie of the Word, ought to have thoſe in high reſpect, whom the Lord hath made inſtrumental for their good; and to evidence that reſpect unto them, chiefly, when they are in a ſuffering caſe: So the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt ought to improve any perſonal reſpect or weight which they have with people, for working of them up towards that, wherein their ſpiritual good doth conſiſt: for, *Paul* obteſteth them by all that good, for the working whereof in them, his miniſtery had been inſtrumental; as alſo by that compaſſionate and tender reſpect which they did owe unto him, being now in bonds, that they would tender his joy and comfort; and chiefly that they would evidence their reſpect unto him, by ſeeking after unity and concord, which was more for their own good, then his; and is here mainly preſſed after by him, the fulfilling of his joy being ſought after onely as a mean to that end, and as an argument to perſwade the thing preſſed: *If there be any conſolation in Chriſt &c. if any bowels and mercies; fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded,* ſaith he. 4. So neceſſary is unity and concord among the people of God, that the enjoyment of Chriſt's preſence, and of ſpiritual conſolation flowing from it; the reaping of any ſpirituall advantage, by the communion and love of the Saints; the entertaining of fellowſhip with God through the operation of his Spirit in us, do in a great part depend upon it: our own differences, carnal emulations, renting of affections, croſſe and contrary actings, do in a great meaſure obſtruct all thoſe, by making Chriſt withdraw his preſence, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. and one of us coldrife and uſeleſſe unto another, *Gal.* 5. 15. and by grieving the Spirit of God, *Eph.* 4. 30. compared with 31. Hence the Apoſtle obteſteth them by all thoſe, that they would fulfill his joy, by being one among

among themſelves; and ſo inſinuateth a neceſſary connexion betwixt their unity, and enjoying of theſe things, while he ſaith, *If there be therefore, &c.* ver. 1. *Fulfil ye my joy, in being like-minded*, ver. 2. 5. The utmoſt endeavours of men and devils to ſad the hearts of Chriſts faithfull ſervants, cannot altogether mar their joy: *Fulfil ye my joy*, ſaith he; which importeth he had ſome joy already. 6. The ſucceſs of the Goſpel among the Churches of Chriſt will be matter of joy unto a publick ſpirited Chriſtian, even in the midſt of all his particular croſſes and ſufferings: for, the fruits o the Goſpel among theſe Philippians ſpoken of, chap. 1. gave occaſion to this begun joy unto *Paul* amidſt his perſonal ſufferings, which he doth here obteſt them to fulfill: *Fulfill ye my joy.* 7. However a Church do otherwiſe flowriſh in gifts, graces and all kind of ſympathy with Chriſtian ſufferers, (as this Church did, chap. 1. v. 6, 7.) yet ſo long as they live in ſtrife and contention among themſelves, they give not ſo much matter of joy unto a true loyer of Jeſus Chriſt by the former, but they give as much matter of grief by the latter: Hence he bids them *fulfil his joy, by being like-minded.* There would be alwaies a mixture of ſadneſſe, and defect in his joy, notwithſtanding the many good things which they already had, if this were not. 8. That unity and concord among ſocieties, and eſpecially among the Churches of Chriſt, may be ſolid and laſting; there would be an union of will and affections, without laying them out on contrary and croſſe objects; an union of deſigns and endeavours, without mutual counterminings, which followeth upon the former; and there would be an union in opinion and matter of judgment, as the fountain of the other two: this is it he preſſeth, firſt generally, *being like-minded*; and then particularly in the other three expreſſions, *having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

Vers. 3. *Let nothing be* done *through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowlinesse of mind let each esteem other better then themselves.*

He dissuadeth them from two vices destructive to unity, to wit, contention and vain-glory; and exhorteth them to humility, or lowlinesse of minde, a grace, whereby a man thinketh meanly of himself, and highly of others. *Doct.* 1. A contentious spirit, which maketh it a man's element to differ from others, and to carry on his point, by out-wearying of others with jangling and strife, is a notable unfriend to unity, and so to be eschewed by all, who would be esteemed lovers of peace. Hence having exhorted them to union, he dehorteth from *doing any thing through strife.* 2. The lust of vainglory (whereby a man pursueth more after applause from men to himself, *Joh.* 12. ver. 43. and to be esteemed of above others, 3 *Joh.* ver. 9. than the honour of God, or to be approven of him) is the mother of contention and strife, and a great unfriend to union and peace; it being a lust which carryeth alongs with it a spirit, which will not cede to truth, *Joh.* 5. v. 44. together with an evident contempt of all others, being compared with the man himself, who is tainted with this evill, 2 *Chron.* 18. ver. 23. Hence he forbids acting from a principle of vainglory, as they would eschew strife, and so entertain union and peace: *let nothing be done through vain-glory.* 3. So ordinary is it for God to plague self-seeking spirits with disappointment, *Luke* 14. ver. 11. so unconstant and unchangeable is popular applause, *Job.* 12. ver. 13. compared with chap. 19. v. 15. and so little is there in any man to be puffed up with, 1 *Cor.* 4. ver. 7. that all glory of this kinde is but *vain glory*, or, but emptie glory, as the word in the original doth bear. 4. The grace of humility, doth not consist in an affected strain of words and gestures, *Matth.* 6. ver. 16. but being seated in the heart, it maketh a man think meanly of himself, or, of any thing that is his: thus the word signifieth,

fieth, and is here rendered *lowlineſs of mind.* 5. Where this grace of humility is, it contributeth much for unity and peace, and is inconſiſtent with a carrying on of our point from a principle of vain glory, or through ſtrife: for, he preſcribeth humility as an antidote againſt thoſe evils, and a ſoveraign mean for attaining unto, and entertaining of union and peace: but *through lowlineſſe of mind*, &c. 6. So conſcious ſhould we be of our own infirmities, 1 *Tim.* 1. ver. 15. ſo modeſt in the eſteem of our own graces and vertues, *Rom.* 12. ver. 3. ſo far from prying into, or aggreaging the infirmities of others, *Prov.* 10. ver. 12. ſo much ſhould we eſteem of their known graces and vertues, *Act.* 15. ver. 8. and ſo prone in charity to beleeve there may be much more good in them, then what appeareth, 1 *Cor.* 13. ver. 7. that we ought to eſteem any other, for what we know of him, to be better then our ſelves: for, *let each eſteem others better then themſelves*, ſaith he. 7. Where Chriſtians are of the forementioned temper, it ſpeaketh true humility, and contributeth much for union and peace: for, the Apoſtle, having injoyned *lowlineſſe of minde* in order to unity, injoyneth the practice thereof in theſe tearms, *let each eſteem others better then themſelves.*

Verſ. 4. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.*

He dehorteth from a third vice deſtructive alſo of union and peace, to wit, ſelf-love, whereby we regard only our own honour and profit, wholly neglecting the concernments of others: He exhorteth alſo to the contrary vertue. *Doct.* 1. Self-love, or reſpect to our own things only, being joyned with contempt and miſ-regard of the intereſt of others, is a great enemy to union and peace: for, while he preſſeth unity, he dehorteth from ſelf-love; *looking not every man to his own things.* 2. The procuring, maintaining and advancing of our neighbours good eſtate, in his profit, honor, fame, and all

ſpirituall bleſſings, ſhould be aimed at and endeavoured by us with the ſame accuracie and diligence, which we uſe in reference to our ſelves; and where Chriſtians are of this temper, it contributeth much for union and peace: for theſe are *the things of others*, which he exhorteth every man *alſo* to *look unto*, or, accuratly aim at, as one ſhooting at a mark: for ſo the word beareth. 3. A Chriſtian is ſo to look upon the concernments of others, as not to neglect theſe things which concern himſelf: for he commandeth, *look alſo on the things of others*; *alſo*, or, joyntly with your own things.

Verſ. 5. *Let this minde be in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.*

The Apoſtle preſſeth all the before-mentioned vertues from Chriſt's example, which he propoundeth here in generall for their imitation. *Doct.* 1. Chriſt's example in theſe things which concern our duty, is a moſt excellent, *Matth.* 11.29. unerring, 1 *Cor.* 11.1. and effectuall patern, 2 *Cor.* 3.18. to be imitated by thoſe who profeſſe themſelves to be his; *Let the ſame minde be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.* 2. This ſhould commend a grace, or, vertue unto us, and make it lovely, that Jeſus Chriſt by his practice, hath given to us a patern of it: for, the Apoſtle preſſeth theſe vertues, becauſe they were eminently to be ſeen in Chriſt; *Let the ſame minde be in you, &c.* 3. Exemplary humility, tender reſpect to the concernments of believers, with a moſt earneſt deſire after the Churches peace, both with God, and amongſt believers themſelves, were eminently to be ſeen in Chriſt: for, he ſaith, *this minde* (to wit, that humble, loving, uniting and modeſt minde, whereof he ſpake in the preceding verſes) *was alſo in Chriſt.*

Verſ. 6. *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equall with God:*

7. *But made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form*

form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſſe of men.

8. *And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſſe.*

He inlargeth and explicateth the example propoſed, to this ſenſe, That Jeſus Chriſt before his incarnation, being true God, cloathed with divine Majeſtie, and ſo in all things equall with God the Father, ver. 6. did nevertheleſſe hide his glory, aſſuming to himſelf the nature of man, with all the ſinleſſe infirmities thereof; ſo that, ſin only excepted, he was in all things like unto other men, v. 7. and being thus incarnate, and found by all who converſed with him, to have all the true properties of a reall man, he voluntarily ſubmitted himſelf to under-go whatſoever was injoyned him by the Father, as neceſſary for the Redemption of mankinde; in which obedience to the Father, he perſevered even to the death; and in end did crown it by under-going the curſed death of the croſſe, v. 8. Now, Chriſt did under-go all this for our good, and the making up of our peace with God, and one with another in God: So, here is in Chriſt great humility and condeſcenſion, and ſuch reſpect unto the good of others, that in ſome ſenſe he did prefer them unto himſelf; together with a moſt earneſt deſire after the Church's peace, which are the vertues preſſed from Chriſt's example, by the Apoſtle upon theſe Philippians. *Doct.* 1. Jeſus Chriſt had a being or ſubſiſtence before his Incarnation; *who being*, or, ſubſiſting, which is ſpoken of him before his Incarnation. 2. That being and ſubſiſtence which he then had, was truly divine: He was from all eternity true God, adorned with divine glory, ſplendour and majeſty: ſee *Prov.* 8. 22, 23. &c. *Who being in the form of God*: by which of neceſſity muſt be underſtood the ſubſtantiall form, or, very divine Eſſence, as cloathed with divine glory and majeſty, there being no accidents in God. 3. Jeſus Chriſt

is God equall with the Father, having the ſame divine Eſſence: for, the divine Names, divine Properties, Works and Worſhip, are aſcribed unto him: See 1 *Joh.* 5.20. *Joh.* 2. 24. *Joh.* 6. 40, and *Joh.* 5.23. Thus he is ſaid to *be equall with God.* 4. The divine Eſſence, glory and majeſty, which Scripture doth aſcribe unto Chriſt, do juſtly and naturally belong unto him, and is not uſurped by him: for, *it is no robbery for him to be equall with God.* 5. The Father and the Son are one only God; it being impoſſible there ſhould be two Gods, or any thing equall with God, which is not God himſelf: now, Chriſt is *equall with God.* 6. Jeſus Chriſt, though having ſtill the ſame divine Eſſence with the Father, yet was alwayes a diſtinct Perſon from him, even the ſecond Perſon of the bleſſed Trinity; See 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. for equality is only in theſe things, which in ſome reſpect are diſtinct: and *he is equal with God.* 7. Then is ones abaſement a vertue, and worthy to be imitated, when it is voluntarily under-taken for the glory of God and the good of others, and not when it is conſtrained, or only impoſed upon us, as a juſt puniſhment for our ſelf-exalting, or any other ſin: Chriſt's humility propounded here for our imitation, was ſuch, as is imported in the ſenſe and ſcope of theſe words; *he thought it no robbery to be equall with God*: The drift whereof, is, to ſhew, that Chriſt, knowing himſelf to be the true God, and not to have uſurped that divine honour, did willingly under-go that low condition, and was not conſtrained to it, as a puniſhment for uſurping upon that, which was not his own by right, as the Devils were thrown down from Heaven, becauſe, as is commonly conceived, they would by robbery have uſurped divine honour, or to be equall with God. 8. Jeſus Chriſt, the Eternall Son of God, in the fulneſſe of time, became man, and was incarnate: for ſo is meant by his *becoming of no reputation,* and *taking on him the form of a ſervant.* 9. It was Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Perſon in the Godhead, who did take on him the nature of man, and was incarnate; and not the

the Father, or the Holy Spirit: for, it is Jeſus Chriſt here ſpoken of, *who took on him the form of a ſervant*: See *Rom.* 1.3. 10. Jeſus Chriſt, by his Incarnation and aſſuming the nature of man, did empty himſelf of that divine glory, ſplendour and majeſty, which before he had: not by ceaſing to be what he was, but by aſſuming ſomething to himſelf, which before he was not, to wit, the humane nature: in which reſpect, as being now God-Man-Mediator, he is leſſe than the Father, *Joh.* 14.28. under the infirmity of which nature, he did hide for a time his divine glory, ſo that very little of it did appear, and to ſome few only. *Iſa.* 53. 2. *he became of no reputation.* In the Greek, it is, he emptied himſelf. 11. Such was the love of Chriſt unto loſt ſinners, *Joh.* 15.13. and to the glory of his own and his Fathers mercy, to be manifeſted in their ſalvation, *Joh.* 17. 4. that willingly, and of his own accord, without any conſtraint (except that of love) he laid aſide his glory, and became low and empty for their good: for, *he made himſelf of no reputation.* 12. Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Perſon of the Godhead, did aſſume to himſelf the true and reall nature of man, having the ſame eſſentiall properties with the natures of other men: for, *he took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſſe of men*: which *likeneſſe* denoteth, not onely a ſimilitude in outward ſhew and appearance, but in the very eſſential parts: See *Gen.* 5.3. 13. Chriſt aſſumed to himſelf the humane nature, not as it ſhall be in glory, perfectly glorified; but as cloathed with ſinleſſe infirmities, even ſuch as are in us the puniſhment of ſin; and did dimit himſelf to be one of the loweſt condition of men: for, *he took upon him the form of a ſervant*, and not of a glorified Saint. 14. Though Jeſus Chriſt did take upon him the whole nature of a man, conſiſting of a true body, *Heb.* 2.14. and a reaſonable ſoul, *Matth.* 26.38. Yet he did not aſſume the perſon of a man; ſo as to be two Perſons, one as God, another as Man: he is one Perſon ſtill, the humane nature ſubſiſting in the ſecond Perſon of the Godhead: ſo, *he*

took

took to himſelf not a ſervant, but *the form*, or, nature of *a ſervant*, and he remaineth the ſame *he*, or, perſon, after incarnation, which he was before: *he took to himſelf*: See *Luk.* 1.35. 15. Though there be but one Perſon in Chriſt; yet there are two diſtinct Natures, the Divine, and Humane, without confuſion or mixture, every one reſerving their own diſtinct properties: ſo he *took on him the form of a ſervant*; but did not change the form or nature of a ſervant to the nature of God: See *Luk.* 2.52. *Joh.* 2.24 25. 16. The truth and reality of Chriſt's humane nature, was evidently known unto thoſe who did converſe with him, by the faſhion and proportion of his body, and the whole ſtrain of his carriage and actions, they being ſuch as are in, and uſe to be gone about by other men: for, ſo much is meant by his *being found in faſhion as a man*. 17. Jeſus Chriſt, though God equall with the Father, and ſo above all Law given unto men, yet being incarnate, did take upon him the yoke of obedience unto the Father's will revealed in the Law; that by the obedience of one many might be made righteous: ſee *Rom.* 5.19. *And became obedient unto death*; where his death is ſpoken of, as the tearm of his obedience, or, as but one part of it at moſt, the reſt conſiſting in his performance of what the Law, both Morall and Ceremoniall did require, and is commonly called, his Active Obedience: ſee *Matth.* 3.15. 18. So great is the guilt of ſin, *Deut.* 27. 26. ſo ſtrict is that obligation, to under-go eternall wrath, which lyeth upon us for ſin, *Matth.* 5.18. that no leſſe could pay our ranſom, and ſatiſfie provoked juſtice, than the ſhamefull, painfull and curſed death of the Son of God: for, in order to our Redemption, he behoved to be *obedient unto death*, even *the death of the croſſe*. 19. Such was the love both of the Father, *Joh.* 3.16. and of the Son, *Joh.* 15.13. to man's ſalvation, that for bringing it about, the Father appointeth the Son to die; and the Son willingly became *obedient to the Father, even to death*.

Verſ.

Verſ. 9. *Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

10. *That at the Name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth:*

11. *And that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The Apoſtle proſecutes this argument taken from Chriſts example, ſhewing, That ſeeing Chriſt did humble himſelf ſo low, God hath exalted him highly, to wit, in his reſurrection, 1 *Cor.* 15. 4. aſcenſion, *Mark* 16. 19. and placing the man Chriſt at his right hand, *Epheſ.* 1. 20. and hath made that divine glory of his, which was hid in the dayes of his humiliation, ſhine forth, by making it manifeſt, That whole crucified Chriſt, God and man in one perſon, is the only begotten ſon of God: this is the *Name above every name*, ver. 9. The ends of beſtowing of this high honour upon Chriſt, were, firſt, That all reaſonable creatures in heaven, earth, or hell, might adore and worſhip him as true God, to wit, ſome willingly as the Elect; others by conſtraint, as the Reprobate ſhall do, when made to ſtand at the Tribunal of Chriſt the Judge, to receive their doom, ver. 10. The ſecond end is, That all theſe creatures may not only ſubject themſelves unto him, but alſo be made openly to profeſſe this crucified Jeſus to be that which he is, even *JEHOVAH*, Lord of all things, the only begotten Son of God: all which glory to be beſtowed on the Son, ſhould detract nothing from the glory of the Father, but adde unto it, ver. 11. *Doct.* 1. Whoſoever is willing, for the glory of God and good of others, to part with his own credit, when he is called to it, may expect from the Lord to have his loſſe and ſuffering in that, richly recompenced: So was it with Chriſt, *he humbled himſelf, and was obedient, and therefore God highly exalted him.* And it is the very ſcope of the Apoſtle hereby to excite the Philip-

Philippians to humility, and ſelf-abaſing for the good of others: becauſe, as Chriſt after his humiliation was exalted, ſo might they expect to be exalted alſo in their own kind. 2. The Lord Chriſt having abaſed himſelf to the loweſt degree of miſery, which he engaged to undergo for our Redemption, was afterwards (and that by vertue of the Covenant of Redemption, ſee *Iſa.* 53. 10.) exalted by the Father, to the higheſt pitch of divine glory: ſo he maketh his exaltation depend upon his humiliation, the one as the neceſſary conſequence of the other; *wherefore God alſo highly exalted him.* 3. Through vertue of the perſonal union betwixt the divine and humane nature in Chriſt, thoſe things which are proper only to the one nature, are aſcribed unto and ſpoken of the whole perſon: So here, though ſomwhat of this high honour, beſtowed on Chriſt in his exaltation, be verified only in the divine nature, to wit, in ſo far as this exaltation ſpeaketh the manifeſtation of divine glory and majeſty, which was before hid: and though ſomwhat of it be verified only in the human nature, in ſo far, as it includeth his reſurrection and aſcenſion; yet the whole of it is aſcribed unto the whole perſon: for, he *exalted him*, to wit, the perſon God-man, and *hath given him a name*: So that divine glory and majeſty, though it be not in the humane nature, yet is, and doth ſhine forth in that perſon, which is man; and though not the Godhead, yet the perſon, who is God, did riſe from the death, and aſcend from earth to heaven. 4. As the giving unto Chriſt a name, which is above every name, doth prove him to be true God, enjoying honour and majeſty truly divine: for, what elſe can be meant, *by a Name above every name*? So, the bowing of every knee unto him, as of right belonging unto him, doth evince the ſame truth: for, hereby is intended that divine honour, due to God only, ſhould be given unto him, as appears from *Iſa.* 45. 23. compared with *Rom.* 14. 10, 11. 5. This *Name, which is above every name*, or, the Divine Nature, Divine Properties, Majeſtie and Splendor truly divine, is ſaid to be given unto Chriſt, not, as if in the dayes

dayes of his humiliation he had not been God; or, as if the humane nature after the reſurrection had been indued with the divine properties; but becauſe his divine majeſtie, before hid, was now manifeſted, and the humane nature ſo highly honoured, that though it be not changed into the divine, yet that perſon who is man, is true God, and was to be acknowledged as ſuch. 6. The worſhip and honour due to God, though it conſiſteth mainly in the inward affections of faith, love, fear and joy, *Joh.* 4. 24. yet it doth not exclude the manifeſtation of theſe affections by the outward geſtures of the body, ſuch as *bowing of the knee,* and *confeſſing with the mouth.* 7. Externals in worſhip are no infallible diſcriminating evidences of theſe who have true grace, from thoſe who have it not: for here, at the Name of Jeſus *every knee ſhall bow,* both of Elect & Reprobate; *and every tongue ſhall confeſs.* 8. The diſgrace, contempt and reproach which Jeſus Chriſt did meet with when he was here upon earth, do contribute much for making his glory illuſtrious now: therefore he ſaith not *at that Name which is above every name,* but, *at the Name of* JESUS (which before his reſurrection was contemptible, and almoſt execrable) *every knee ſhall bow.* 9. However a ſmall part of the world onely doth acknowledge Chriſt to be God and Lord, being compared with thoſe who acknowledge him not; yet his glory ſhall be ſtill upon the growing hand, untill all reaſonable creatures in Heaven, Earth, or Hell, ſubject themſelves unto him, and acknowledge him to be the only begotten Son of God: for, *to him every knee ſhall bow, & every tongue ſhall confeſs, whether of things in heaven,* as Angels, and the Souls of them who ſleep in the Lord; *or things on earth,* as Men yet alive; *or things under the earth,* as Devils and damned ſouls: For, though Angels and Spirits have neither corporal knees, nor fleſhly tongues; yet they have ſome means whereby they are bound, and ſhall, whether they will or not, expreſſe and teſtifie their ſubjection to our Lord and Saviour: All which ſhall have its full accompliſhment at the laſt day, when

when Devils and damned men ſhall be made to ſtand at the Tribunal of Chriſt to receive their doom: ſee *Rom.* 14. 11. 10. To bow the knee, and uncover the head at the pronunciation of the ſyllables of the name *Jeſus*, is but a ſuperſtitious cuſtom and will-worſhip, having no warrant from this Scripture: for, by the name of JESUS, is not to be underſtood the naked ſyllables, ſound, and letters of that word, but the glory and majeſty of the Lord Chriſt, who (notwithſtanding of that reproach which he did meet with in the dayes of his fleſh) ſhall one day be acknowledged by all; otherwiſe if the letter of the words be preciſely ſtuck to, how ſhall Angels and Spirits bow the knee, who have none? 11. As the giving of divine honour to Chriſt doth no wayes impair the glory of God the Father: ſo, whoever detracteth any thing from the honour of God the Son (as thoſe Hereticks do, who deny his Godhead) they in ſo far detract from the glory of God the Father: for the bowing of the knee, aud confeſſing with the tongue, that *Jeſus is the Lord*, is *to the glory of God the Father.*

Verſ. 12. *Wherefore my beloved, as you have alwayes obeyed, not as in my preſence only, but now much more in my abſence; work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling.*

The Apoſtle, from this excellent example of Chriſt, ſo ſweetly enlarged, and by a new argument taken from their by-paſt obedience, when he was preſent with them, preſſeth, and enlargeth the former exhortation, exciting them to make conſtant progreſſe in the way of ſalvation, and that with fear and trembling: whereby he dehorteth them from ſecurity, pride and preſumption, vices oppoſite to theſe vertues of modeſty and humility, which from the beginning of the chapter he hath been preſſing in order to union. *Doct.* 1. Then do we take a right view of Chriſt's moſt excellent example, when the beholding of him maketh us walk like him, by imitating him in theſe vertues, which were eminently in him: ſo *Paul*, having enlarged

enlarged the example of Chriſt, exciteth them to the imitation thereof; *Wherefore my beloved*, ſaith he. 2. A Miniſter may, and in ſome reſpects ought to commend the People of God committed to his charge, for their willing obedience unto the Word of the Lord from his mouth; yea, and make known even to themſelves the good eſteem he hath of them: ſo doth the Apoſtle here, *as ye have alwayes obeyed*, ſaith he. 3. Whatever approbation one Chriſtian receiveth from another, or from their judicious diſcerning Miniſter, it ſhould be made uſe of as a ſpur to excite to further diligence; and is not to be reſted upon, as if having it we had enough: for ſo the Apoſtle commandeth, as *ye have alwaies obeyed, now much more work out, &c.* 4. The leſſe we have of outward excitements to our duty, and the more of diſcouragements to drive us from it, we ought to be the more intent upon it; as hereby giving evidence of our ſincerity, that what we do, floweth not meerly from outward principles, but from inward reſpect and love to that which is commanded: ſo the Apoſtle bids them, *now much more obey in his abſence*, when he was not preſent to excite them to go forward; and many ſeducers were now diſcovered to draw them backward, that hereby they might evidence the ſincerity of that obedience which they gave unto him when he was with them preſent, as not being eye-ſervice unto *Paul*, but from reſpect to the command of an omnipreſent God. 5. In times of ſchiſms and heart-diviſions, it is too ordinary for people to be taken up with trifles, neglecting thoſe things wherein their ſalvation is moſt concerned: his preſſing of them to *work out their own ſalvation*, importeth, that through their diviſions this work was much neglected. 6. If people were imployed as they ought about that great work, how to get their own ſouls ſaved, they would be leſſe in Church-renting, and dividing one from another for matters of ſmaller importance: therefore he preſſeth them to *work out their own ſalvation*, that he may hereby divert them from their contention and ſtrife. 7. Heaven

is

is not to be expected by the lazy and negligent, or ſuch as draw back: There muſt be a *working*, and a *working of it out*: whereby is meant, the imploying of all our abilities and endeavours, to practiſe all thoſe means that God hath appointed for the accompliſhment of our ſalvation, *Luke* 13. 24. and a conſtant continuance in the practice of them, until heaven and ſalvation be actually beſtowed, *Matth.* 24. 13. This is to *work out our ſalvation*: and ſo the word ſignifieth to carry on a thing begun to its full end. 8. However Scripture doth condemn that fear in Believers, which cauſeth diffidence, doubting and deſpair, *Matth.* 8. 26. yet there is a fear oppoſite to carnal ſecurity, and to preſuming on our own ſtrength, which carryeth along with it a ſollicitous care about, and diligence in every thing which is our duty, *Pſal.* 5. 7. together with humility and diffidence in our ſelves, *Rom.* 11. 20. This is a fear and trembling which is lawful and here commanded, as moſt neceſſary for carrying on the begun work of ſalvation unto a perfect cloſe: *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling.*

Verſ. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*

He gives a reaſon why they ought to work with fear and trembling, holding off the extreams of lazy ſecurity, and carnal confidence: becauſe the beginning, progreſſe and accompliſhment of every good work is from God working freely; and therefore they were not through ſecurity to neglect the motions of his Spirit in them to good, nor yet be puffed up with conceit of their own ſtrength. *Doct.* 1. The very firſt motions unto and beginnings of any thing which is ſpiritually good, are the work of Gods grace: for, *he worketh in us*, not only *to do*, but alſo *to will*, and that by infuſing into the ſoul a power to will that which is good; and by actuating that power, making us actually to will: So, he not only giveth new ſupernatural faculties, but alſo the uſe and exerciſe of them.

them. 2. Though the first motions and beginnings of that which is spiritually good be wholly from God; yet he doth not constrain, or by force necessitate the will unto it, but by his omnipotent power he moveth sweetly, and worketh effectually upon the will, so that he maketh it willing to will that good which is by him intended: *he worketh in us to will.* 3. The natural faculties and powers of the soul, are not made useless by grace, as if they were laid aside to do nothing, the grace of God in us in the mean time doing all things; The will of man is indeed renewed by grace, and the will being thus renewed, doth also work: for, he *worketh in us to will*: we do will, being wrought upon by God. 4. The operation of Gods Spirit in working grace, is more than naked moral swasion, which consists only in propounding of the object, and holding forth inducing considerations to make the will close with that object, there being still an indifferency left to man's free-will to accept or refuse, as liketh him best: There is besides this a real influence from the Spirit of the Lord upon the will; a pull of omnipotent power, whereby the will is moved infallibly and certainly to close with the object: for, *he worketh to will*, and so determineth the will. 5. Not only are the first principles of, and motions unto that which is spiritually good from the influence of Gods grace; but also the flowing forth of these motions, and acting according to these gracious principles, doth flow from the same free-grace of God working powerfully in us: for, as he *worketh to will*, so also *to do*. 6. This powerful work of God, whereby he worketh the beginnings, increase, and accomplishments of grace in us, is altogether free, flowing from his good will and pleasure, and is not merited by any thing wrought by us, *Rom.* 11. 35. His giving of more grace, is not merited by our use-making of the first grace, *Jam.* 4. 6. nor yet the first grace by the right use of our natural parts, *Eph.* 2. 1. for, he *worketh of his good will and pleasure.* 7. Though Christians be exhorted to the diligent performance of all commanded

duties; yet this impedeth not, but the beginning, progreſſe, and accompliſhment of every work ſpiritually good, is wholly from God; for, exhortations ſhew what we *ought*, but not what we are *able* to do: hence, though they are commanded, ver. 12. *to work out their own ſalvation*; yet, it is affirmed here, *it is God who worketh*. 8. To aſcribe, with Scripture, the whole work of grace in us, to God as the author, is a ſtrong engine to batter down all confidence in our own ſtrength, and to ſhake off carnal ſecurity, and ſtir us up to diligence: ſo far is it from rendering men lazie and ſecure: for having exhorted them to work out their own ſalvation with fear and trembling, and ſo to ſhake off ſecurity and ſelf-confidence, he giveth this as a reaſon, *It is God that worketh in you, &c.*

Verſ. 14. *Do all things without murmurings, and diſputings.*

He repeateth his dehortation from diſſention and diſcord; ſetting forth diviſions by their two uſual and bitter fruits, to wit, private backbitings, and publick contentions or ſtrife. *Doct.* 1. Private backbitings, ſecret whiſperings, and venting of mutual miſtakes to the prejudice one of another, as they are unſeemly among Chriſtians; ſo they are the ordinary fruits of diviſion and diſcord in the Church: for, theſe are the *murmurings* from which he dehorteth. 2. Publick fruitleſſe conteſts, hot debates, bitter reflections, are in like manner unſeemly among Chriſtians, and another ordinary fruit of diviſion and diſcord: for, theſe are the *diſputings* here ſpoken of.

Verſ. 15. *That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, among whom ye ſhine as lights in the world:*
16. *Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoyce in the day of Chriſt, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*

He

He preſſeth obedience to the former exhortation, becauſe of the many and great advantages following hereupon; namely, That hereby, as by one mean, they ſhould attain to live. 1. ſo, as none could juſtly blame them. 2. ſo, as they ſhould do no harm unto others. 3. ſo, as to enjoy convincing evidences of their ſonſhip and adoption. 4. ſo, as to ſtop the mouths of a number of godleſſe Pagans, by holding forth in their profeſſion and practice the way to life revealed in the Goſpel, that thoſe poor Pagans, among whom they lived, might fall in love with it; and 5. ſo, as *Paul* might have matter of joy in their ſalvation by his Miniſtry at the day of judgment: Which advantages as they were to follow one upon another, ſo all of them would be promoved much by their unity and concord, and obſtructed much by diſſention and diſcord. *Doct.* 1. Where a ſpirit of pride and contention, together with private whiſperings and publick hot debates, falleth in upon a Church, it will be found hard for any, who is engaged in that ſtrife, to carry himſelf ſo, but ſomwhat worthy of blame will eſcape him: for he maketh their living blameleſſe, to be the fruit of doing all things without murmurings and diſputings: *that ye may be blameleſs.* 2. It is no ſmall difficulty alſo for any, who is ſo engaged, to watch over his own ſpirit with that circumſpection and tenderneſſe, but he will upon ſome occaſion be doing hurt unto others; either by admitting groundleſſe reports, and entertaining jealouſies of them, or ſpeaking to their diſadvantage himſelf; or not ſtanding for their juſt credit, when they are reproachfully ſpoken of by others, or by bitter reflections, or ſome ſuch like thing, 2 *Cor.* 12. 20. for he maketh harmleſſe living a fruit of unity, *that ye may be harmleſs.* 3. Diviſion and ſtrife, together with the ſinful effects which theſe produce in peoples ſpirits, do often grieve the Spirit, and darken theſe evidences of adoption and ſonſhip, which Believers, being in a calm and peacable temper of ſpirit, uſe to ſee moſt clearly: for, he maketh their being the ſons of God, or the evidencing of their ſonſhip, depend upon

their doing all things without murmurings: *that ye may be the ſons of God.* 4. There is nothing which maketh Atheiſts and enemies of the Goſpel take more occaſion to vomit out their ſpite and malice againſt it, and the profeſſors of it, than the ſchiſms and ſidings, murmurings and backbitings, publick conteſts and bitter reflexions, which are among Chriſtians themſelves: for, he maketh the ſtopping of the mouths of godleſſe Pagans to be a fruit of unity and peace within the Church: *that ye may be without rebuke, in the midſt of a perverſe nation.* 5. It ſeemeth good unto the Lord for wiſe reaſons, at ſometimes to meaſure out the lot of his precious ſervants among a multitude of godleſſe prophane Atheiſts: for, thoſe Philippians did live in *the midſt of a perverſe nation.* 6. It concerneth thoſe, who are ſo diſpoſed of, to walk the more circumſpectly, that no occaſion may be given to wicked men to wound the Goſpel through their ſides: for, ſo he enjoyneth, *that ye may be in the midſt of a perverſe nation without rebuke.* 7. Whatever be a mans carriage otherwiſe for civility, policy, moral or natural parts; yet ſo long as he imbraceth not the Goſpel, but remaineth an enemy unto it, he is in Gods eſteem but crooked, perverſe, froward, and nothing worth: So, all who lived at Philippi, except the Chriſtians, are here called, *a crooked and perverſe nation:* though doubtleſſe many of them did excell in natural and morall parts. 8. Then do we ſtop the mouths of enemies unto truth, when our converſation, for piety unto God, and righteouſneſſe unto our neighbour, is ſuch, as may diſcover unto them their failings, and point out that good way wherein they ought to walk: for, he ſhews how we may be free of their rebukes, even when *we ſhine as lights in the world.* 9. There is a duty lying upon Chriſtians, of thirſting after, and labouring to bring about the ſalvation of theſe among whom they live, though never ſo wicked and perverſe: ſo, they were *to ſhine as lights:* and by their profeſſion and practice, *to hold forth the word of life* in their ſeveral ſtations, *even in the midſt of a crooked*

and

and perverse nation. 10. Suitable practice joyned with profession, putteth such a majestie and splendour upon Truth, that every Christian walking orderly is the same to profane men, among whom they live in order to their conviction, and discovery of their sin, and pointing out the lovely beauty of the way of Holinesse; which the Sun and Moon is in the Firmament in order to the discovering of things hid by natural darkness: for, saith he, *ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth.* 11. There is no life worthy to be so called, being compared with the life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, *Gal.* 2. 20, there is no way of attaining this life, but by Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal, *Joh.* 17. 3. and there is no way to know Christ but by the Gospel, *Rom.* 1. 1, 3. This is imported while the Gospel, which holdeth out Christ, is called by way of excellency, *The Word of Life.* 12. The office of the Ministery, being faithfully gone about, is so painful, weighty, and full of labour, that it may take up any one man wholly, and will prove as wasting of his natural spirits, as any other imployment which can be chosen: hence the Apostle expresseth his pains taken in the Ministery, by running in a race, and other strength-consuming exercises: for the word rendered *laboured*, signifieth exercises of that kind; *that I have not run, neither laboured.* 13. However, the pains of a faithful Minister will not be lost as to himself, and from the Lord, *Isa.* 49. 4. yet they may be in vain, as to the peoples profiting, and in regard of any comfort which he enjoyeth from the fruits of his labours upon them: this is here supponed as possible, while he saith, *that I have not run in vain.* 14. The glory which shall be put upon gracious souls in the day of judgment, will adde to the glory and joy of these faithful Ministers, by whose labours they were gained unto God: hence *Paul* exhorteth them to unity, to live blamelesse, without rebuke, shining as lights: *that*, saith he, *I may rejoyce in the day of Christ.*

Verſ. 17. *Yea, and if I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith, I joy, and rejoyce with you all.*
18. *For the ſame cauſe alſo do ye joy, and rejoyce with me.*

He ſheweth the bringing about of his joy in the day of the Lord Jeſus, ought to have weight with them; becauſe of his earneſt deſire after their ſpirituall good: which was ſuch, that if, as he had been inſtrumentall for bringing them to Chriſt, by faith in him, ſo his blood ſhould be ſhed for confirmation of their faith, and ſealing of his own miniſtery or *ſervice*; his death upon that accompt ſhould not be grievous, but joyous unto him, and that becauſe it ſhould tend to their advantage and joy: and therefore he bindeth it upon them, as their duty, to *joy and rejoyce with* him, that is, to do that which would tend to his comfort and joy; eſpecially, that they would walk chriſtianly, ſtudy humility, and live in concord and unity, which ver. 2. he called *the fulfilling of his joy*. *Doct.* 1. The ſacrifices acceptable unto God, under the New Teſtament, next to that of Chriſt his offering up himſelf upon the croſſe, *Heb.* 9.14. are, when Chriſtians being made to judge themſelves, and ſo, as it were ſlain by the ſervice and miniſtery of the Word, are chaſed to lay hold by faith on that ſacrifice of Chriſt's, and offer up themſelves wholly to be ſpent and waſted in his ſervice, *Rom.* 12. 1. for, the Apoſtle here ſpeaketh with alluſion to the Leviticall ſacrifices, making their faith, or giving themſelves over to God in Chriſt by faith, the ſacrifice, and his miniſtery or *ſervice*, the ſacrifizing knife: by the means whereof, they were as it were killed and offered up, being made to die to their own righteouſneſſe and ſinfull luſts, and to flee unto God in Chriſt by faith; *upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith*. 2. However perſecuters, in ſhedding the blood of Gods People, for their adherence to truth and duty, do aim at no further, but to ſatisfie their own cruelty and rage,

Matth.

Matth. 14. 3. yet the Lord intendeth a more high and noble end, to wit, that hereby believers may be more confirmed in the faith of that truth for which they ſuffer: for, if *Paul* ſhould be *offered* up by death, he fore-ſeeth that it would be upon the *ſacrifice of their faith*: he ſpeaketh, as was ſaid, with alluſion to the ancient way of ſacrifizing, where wine and oyl were poured out upon the meat-offering, that the ſacrifice might be intire and compleat, according to what the Law did preſcribe, *Levit.* 2. 7. 15. ſo, the ſhedding of his blood, ſhould tend to accompliſh the ſpiritual ſacrifice of their faith, they attaining thereby a ſtrong confirmation to it: *If I be offered up*, or, *poured forth upon the ſacrifice, &c.* 3. Miniſters would preach nothing to God's people, but what they dare ſeal the truth of with their blood, if God call them to it: ſo *Paul* is ready to have his blood poured out upon *the ſervice of their faith*, that is, for confirmation of his own Miniſtery, by means whereof, faith was wrought in them. 4. When God doth call a man to ſuffer, and maketh uſe of his ſufferings for confirmation of any part of Goſpel-truth, and for edifying the body of Chriſt, he ought to rejoyce in his Croſſe, as if it were his Crown: ſo *Paul*, *I joy and rejoyce.* 5. The ardent zeal and affection, which we ſee in others, toward our ſalvation and ſpiritual good, ſhould incite us to be as affectionate towards it our ſelves: ſo, from this, that *Paul* was ſo much taken up with their ſpirituall advantage, as to die for it, he preſſeth them to take part with him: *Wherefore, do ye alſo joy with me*, to wit, in that wherein he did rejoyce, which was in their Chriſtian converſation, unity and concord among themſelves.

Verſ. 19. *But I truſt in the Lord Jeſus, to ſend Timotheus ſhortly unto you, that I alſo may be of good comfort, when I know your ſtate.*

In the ſecond part of the Chapter, the Apoſtle promi-

ſes, if the Lord Chriſt ſhould ſo judge fitting, to ſend *Timotheus* unto them: and that not only for their good and advantage to be reaped by his labours, in compoſing their begun differences, and ſtopping the mouths of gain-ſayers; but alſo for his own comfort, as hoping at *Timothe's* return, to hear their affairs to be in a better poſture, than they were for the preſent. *Doct.* 1. The preſence and aſſiſtance ſometimes of one man eminent for piety, parts and reputation, will prove ſo ſteadable to the Church, labouring under ſchiſme and feared perſecution, that the very intimation of a purpoſe to ſend ſuch a one, will adde much ſpirit and courage unto thoſe who are honeſt: therefore *Paul*, to keep them from fainting, maketh known his purpoſe to ſend *Timotheus*. 2. All our promiſes and purpoſes, are to be undertaken with ſubmiſſion to the will of Chriſt, and grounded upon his power and ſtrength (and not our own) for bringing of them unto timeous performance: ſo was *Paul's* purpoſe to ſend *Timothie*: *I truſt in the Lord Jeſus to ſend*; whereby he doth not expreſſe a hope, or confidence of faith, but onely of charity and love to the Churche's good, 1 *Cor.* 13. 7. which made him hope that God would bring about that particular, which tended ſo much to their advantage, although he had no certain promiſe for it to build faith upon. 3. The croſſes and comforts of a Chriſtian, indued with a truly publick ſpirit, depends not ſo much upon thoſe things which are of particular concernment to himſelf, as thoſe which are of publick concernment to Jeſus Chriſt, and to his Church in the World: ſo *Paul's* comfort, though now in bonds, depended much upon the ſtate of this Church at Philippi: *I may be of good comfort, when I know your ſtate*, ſaith he.

Verſ. 20 *For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your ſtate.*

He commendeth *Timotheus* from his affection towards them,

them, in ſo far, that he came not ſhort of the Apoſtle himſelf, or at leaſt, reſembled him moſt in his ſincerity and diligence in ſeeking after their ſpirituall good. There was no man like-minded to *Paul*, except *Timotheus* alone: for he is excepted, as appears from ver. 22. *Doct.* 1. It contributeth much for the good ſucceſſe of a Miniſter's pains among a People, that he be looked upon by them, as one who will thirſt after their good, more than any thing elſe: ſo *Paul* being to ſend *Timothie*, repreſenteth him as ſuch; *he naturally careth for your eſtate.* 2. That a Miniſter may be fitted to do good among a People, he would place before himſelf the patern of the Apoſtles; and ſo far as in him lyeth, ſet himſelf to imitate them in that care, diligence and affection, which they had towards the Church of Chriſt: for, herein is *Timothie* commended, *I have no man like-minded.* 3. Then doth a Miniſter imitate the Apoſtles in watching over their flock; when, firſt, the ſtate of ſouls is the object of his care, *he careth for your ſtate.* Secondly, when their care is more than ordinary, and in a ſort anxious and ſolicitous: even a care, which in other things would be ſinfull; the Greek word ſignifieth ſuch a *care.* And thirdly, when it is ſuch, as is naturall and kindly, ariſing, not from conſtraint, 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. but from love to the party cared for, being ſuch, as is the care of a parent toward his child: *who will naturally care*, ſaith he.

Verſ. 21. *For all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſts.*

He further commendeth the care, which *Timotheus* had of them: It was ſuch, that he poſtponed his own particular affairs, to the work of Chriſt among them, wherein he was ſingular; almoſt all others, who were with *Paul*, refuſing (as would appear) to undertake ſo long a journey, from the too great reſpect they had to their own eaſe and profit. *Doct.* 1. So near is the relation betwixt Chriſt and the Church (ſuch as is of the husband

to

to the wife, *Rev.* 21.9. of the Head to the Members, *Eph.* 1.22. of the King to his Subjects, *Matth.* 21.5.) that both their concernments are one; what concerneth them, concerneth him: ſo, the under-taking of ſo long a journey, for the advantage of the Church at Philippi, which all declined, except *Timotheus* onely, is here called, a *ſeeking the things of Jeſus Chriſt.* 2. This commendeth a man's zeal for Chriſt much, when the lukewarmneſſe of others doth not blunt his edge; but, though all ſhould be for their own things, yet, he alone will be for the things of Jeſus Chriſt: for, herein is *Timotheus* commended. 3. Our own things, that is, worldly eaſe, profit, credit, pleaſure; and the things of Chriſt, wherein his honour, and the publick good of his people is much concerned, are often in two contrary ballances; reſpect to the former, making us frequently to neglect the latter: for, ſo are they here oppoſed: *their own things, not the things of Chriſt.* 4. Though Chriſtians may, and juſtly ought, to ſeek their own things, with ſubordination to the things of Chriſt, 1 *Tim.* 5.8. Yet, they may not ſeek their own things, in oppoſition to the things of Chriſt; that is, ſo, as for reſpect to the former, to neglect the latter: for, *Paul* condemnes not the ſeeking of their own things ſimply; but, that through ſeeking of them, they did not *ſeek the things of Chriſt.* 5. A Chriſtian, and eſpecially a Miniſter, ought to be ſo diſpoſed, that no private intereſt, or concernment of his own, ſhould ſo far weigh with him, as to make him, for reſpect unto it, ſhift, or refuſe any thing, which Chriſt doth call him unto, for furtherance of his Work: for, herein is *Timothie* commended; and, for want of this diſpoſition, the reſt are blamed: *all ſeek their own things.* 6. The Lord, by putting Profeſſours upon hazardous, troubleſome, and expenſive imployments for Chriſt, diſcovereth often in many, too much love to ſelf, and little love to Chriſt, which otherways would have lyen undiſcovered: ſo, the motion of this long journey to Philippi, did diſcover in the moſt part of *Paul's* companions, that they did *ſeek their own things, and not the things of Chriſt.*

Verſ.

Verſ. 22. *But ye know the proof of him, that as a ſon with the father, he hath ſerved with me in the Goſpel.*

For proof of all, he appealeth to their own experience, concerning *Timotheus*, while he preached the Goſpel with *Paul* at Philippi, as a ſon with the father; which ſpeaketh both his modeſtie, as alſo, that he was like-minded with *Paul*, in all things following his example. *Doct.* 1. A Miniſter's own carriage, if it be modeſt, Chriſtian and miniſterial, will ſpeak more to his commendation among judicious Chriſtians, than all the recommendations which he can have from others, although theſe be in their own place uſefull and lawfull: *but ye know the proof of him*, ſaith he, I need not ſpeak much for him. 2. The calling of the Miniſterie, is a ſervice; and Miniſters are ſervants to Chriſt, for the Church, and not lords over their faith, 1. *Pet.* 5. 3. ſo *Paul* and *Timothie did ſerve in the Goſpel.* 3. Thoſe who are of older ſtanding in the Miniſterie, and thereby have attained a good meaſure of reſpect, parts, experience and prudence, ſhould not deſpiſe theſe of later ſtanding, but acknowledge them as fellow-ſervants: ſo *Paul*, though a great Apoſtle, and the elder Miniſter, yet acknowledgeth *Timothie* as his fellow-ſervant: *he hath ſerved with me in the Goſpel*, ſaith he. 4. Theſe who are of late ſtanding in the Miniſtery, ought to honour the aged, as the ſon doth the parent, obeying their counſels, and following their example in thoſe things which tend to the edification of the Church: ſo did *Timothie* honour *Paul*: *as a ſon with the father, he hath ſerved with me in the Goſpel.*

Verſ. 23 *Him therefore I hope to ſend preſently, ſo ſoon as I ſhall ſee how it will go with me.*

24. *But I truſt in the Lord, that I alſo my ſelf ſhall come ſhortly.*

He

He concludeth from what is ſaid, his purpoſe to ſend *Timothie*, having once ſeen how himſelf ſhould be diſpoſed of, in relation to his preſent impriſonment and bonds, ver. 23. and withall, giveth them hopes, that he himſelf being ſet at liberty, ſhould give them a viſit ſhortly, ver. 24. *Doct.* 1. Thoſe who have power of ſending forth Miniſters to Flocks, ſhould ſend ſuch as (other things being equall) are moſt willing to ſpend and be ſpent for the Peoples good, and are beſt known unto, and approved of by the Flock, for their modeſty, diligence, zeal to the gaining of ſouls, and for their other parts: for, *Paul* having ſhewen *Timothie* to be ſuch, concludeth, *him therefore will I ſend.* 2. A Miniſter may then poſtpone the publick good and comfort of the Church to his own particular, when his particular comfort may carry alongs with it a ſufficient future recompence of larger comfort to the Church, for her preſent loſſe and delay: ſo *Paul* keepeth back *Timothie* for a time to attend himſelf, expecting that probably he ſhould be liberate himſelf ſhortly, that by the certain knowledge of his being ſet at liberty, they might be the more comforted: *ſo ſoon as I ſhall ſee how it will go with me.* 3. The running upon hazard, and drawing on of a croſſe by our former zeal for Chriſt, and diligence in his work, ſhould not make us repent of what we have done; nor yet draw back from doing the like, when ever any new opportunity is offered: ſo *Paul* reſolveth to go from the priſon, to his work again: *I my ſelf ſhall come ſhortly.* 4. Whatever may be ſaid from Chap. 1. v. 25. concerning *Paul's* perſwaſion, grounded upon ſpeciall revelation of his delivery from priſon, yet it appeareth, nothing was revealed to him of the time, when his delivery ſhould be: and therefore in this place, when he would limit it to a ſhort time, he ſpeaketh not with ſo full perſwaſion: *I truſt in the Lord to ſee you ſhortly*, ſaith he.

Verſ.

Verſ. 25: *Yet I ſuppoſed it neceſſary to ſend to you* Epaphroditus, *my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-ſouldier, but your meſſenger, and he that miniſtred to my wants.*

The Apoſtle in the mean time ſendeth back their own Paſtour *Epaphroditus*, who had been ſent to *Paul* with ſome ſupply, and to miniſter unto him in the priſon: And leſt the Philippians ſhould have thought, that either he had deſerted *Paul*, or, that *Paul* had not thought him worth the keeping, he ſheweth, that he had expreſſely ſent him back, and commendeth him as a worthy man, from five honourable epithets. *Doct.* 1. There is a relation of fraternitie among Chriſtians, as all being born over again through the vertue of the ſame ſpirit, *Eph.* 4. 4. within the boſom of one common mother the Church, *Gal.* 4. 26. having all intereſt in God, as their Father, *Rom.* 8. 15. and in Jeſus Chriſt, who is the firſt-born among many brethren, *Rom.* 8. 29. for, *Paul* calleth *Epaphroditus*, a *brother*, as he was a Chriſtian. 2. As the Miniſterial imployment is a painfull laborious work; ſo theſe who are imployed in it, ſhould be fellow-labourers, working to the hands each of other: for, in reſpect of the Miniſteriall calling, common to both, he calleth him his *companion in labour*, or, co-worker. 3. Though every Chriſtian will have a battel, *Eph.* 6. 12. yet faithful Miniſters, who are as Standard-bearers, or, Centinels, *Ezek.* 3. 17. and march in the front before the Lord's People, 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. have a peculiar battell of their own for truth and pietie, againſt profanity and errour: with reſpect to which battell, he calleth him *fellow-ſouldier*. 4. To be imployed by the Church, and ſent upon her affairs, if it were but for conveying of their charity unto thoſe for whom it is appointed, is an honourable imployment, even to an Apoſtle's companion: for, *Paul* commendeth him from this, that he was *the Churches meſſenger*, to wit, for carrying of their charity to *Paul*, Chap. 4. 18.

5. To

5. To be in any meaſure uſeful for, and ſerviceable unto an honeſt ſufferer for Chriſt, is matter of no ſmall commendation: for, *Epaphroditus* is commended from this, that *he miniſtred unto* Paul *in his wants.*

Verſ. 26. *For he longed after you all, and was full of heavineſs, becauſe that ye had heard that he had been ſick.*

The reaſons, why *Paul* thought it neceſſary to ſend *Epaphroditus* unto them, are ſubjoyned in this and the two following verſes; whereof the firſt is taken from *Epaphroditus* his great deſire to be at his Charge, together with his great grief and heavineſſe for them, as knowing they would be exceedingly weighted for him, having heard that he was ſick. *Doct.* 1. A faithful Miniſter's affection unto, and longing after his abſent Flock, will go beyond his deſire after family, friends, and other relations: for, his longing after them *all*, his whole Flock; and not his natural friends only, was that which neceſſitated *Paul* to ſend him home: *he longed after you all.* 2. The affection of a Miniſter unto his Flock, and to their advancing in the way of grace, ought to be ſuch, that even when through neceſſity of ſickneſſe, or of other lawful employments, he is withdrawn from them, he may yet ſtill long to be among them: ſo *Epaphroditus*, though detained by ſickneſs, and his neceſſary attendance upon *Paul*, *yet longed after them all.* 3. There ought to be that love and ſympathy betwixt Miniſter and People, as to make each of them grieve for the affliction and grief of another: ſo the Philippians hearing their Miniſter was ſick, are weighted with it, and he knowing they would be grieved for him, becometh full of heavineſſe for them: *he was full of heavineſs, becauſe ye had heard he was ſick.* 4. Grief or heavineſſe of mind, becauſe of the hand of God upon our ſelves, or others, is not inconſiſtent with chriſtian patience and ſubmiſſion to providence: Patience moderateth thoſe paſſions, but doth not deſtroy them: ſo *Epaphroditus* is commended from this, that *he was full of heavineſs, becauſe of their grief.*

Verſ.

Verſ. 27. *For indeed he was ſick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him: and not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow.*

He ſheweth the report of *Epaphroditus* his deadly diſeaſe was true, and commendeth the eſpecial mercy of God, both to *Epaphroditus* and himſelf; whereby the one was reſtored to health, and the other thereby delivered from further occaſion of great grief. *Doct.* 1. The Lord doth ſometimes ſuffer his precious ſervants to fall in dangerous diſeaſes, not exempting his moſt faithful Miniſters, who, by reaſon of their labours in the work of the Lord, and the many diſcouragements whereby their ſpirits are aſſaulted in it, (*Iſa.* 49. 4.) are as much liable to diſeaſes and infirmities of body as any other: for *indeed he was ſick*. 2. The Lord doth ſometimes ſuffer his ſervants to fall into deſperate dangers, for which there is no humane remedy, that his mercy may be the more ſeen in their delivery: ſo *he was ſick near unto death*; his diſeaſe was deadly and incurable by humane art: hence his reſtoration to health is looked on as an act of Gods mercy; *but God had mercy on him*. 3. That God preſerveth the life of faithful Paſtors, is an act of no ſmall mercy, eſpecially unto thoſe who enjoy the benefit of their labours: and the removal of ſuch by death, ſhould be looked upon as no ſmall ſtroak: *but God had mercie*; and his removal by death would have been *ſorrow upon ſorrow*, even to *Paul*. 4. Seeing death, conſidered in it ſelf, is terrible, *Pſal.* 55. 4. the reward of ſin, *Rom.* 6. 23. and a privation of preſent life, *Jam.* 2. 26. Deliverie from it, though but for a time, is a mercy even to believers, who by death loſe nothing, but gain much, Chap. 1. v. 23. eſpecially if their delivery from death be a mercy unto others: hence it is that *Epaphroditus* his delivery from death was a mercy even unto himſelf, *but God had mercy on him*. 5. A work of mercy ordinarily goeth not alone, but carryeth many mercies along with it; ſome to the perſon him-

himſelf upon whom the work is wrought; and ſome to others who are concerned in him: Thus the mercy that was manifeſted to *Epaphroditus* in his recovery, was a mercy alſo to *Paul*; *and not on him only, but on me alſo.* 6. Then do mercies weigh with us as they ought, when we look upon the ſad effects which would have followed upon the not beſtowing of ſuch a mercy: Thus *Paul* taketh a view of the extremity of ſorrow which the death of *Epaphroditus* would have cauſed unto him, which maketh him look upon his recovery as a mercy; *but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow.* 7. So merciful is God, that though ſometimes he cauſeth grief unto his deareſt ſervants, yet he conſidereth their weakneſs, and doth not overcharge them with ſorrow: ſo he ſpared the life of *Epaphroditus*, leſt *Paul ſhould have had ſorrow upon ſorrow.* 8. Courage under ſufferings for Chriſt, and rejoycing in God may well conſiſt with moderate ſorrow and heavineſſe, becauſe of croſſe diſpenſations: for, though *Paul* hath profeſſed often his great joy under his bonds (as chap. 1. v. 4, 18.) yet he was not free of ſorrow; *leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow*, which ſuppoſeth he had ſome ſorrow already.

Verſ. 28. *I ſent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye ſee him again, ye may rejoyce, and that I may be the leſſe ſorrowful.*

Having given and enlarged one reaſon for his ſending *Epaphroditus*, he addeth other two. Firſt, That the Philippians, having ſeen their faithful Miniſter, whom they once took for dead, might rejoyce. Secondly, That *Paul*'s own grief might he ſomwhat eaſed, their Miniſter being once reſtored to them, of whom they were deprived for his cauſe. *Doct.* 1. True love and chriſtian friendſhip protracteth not favours, but doth timeouſly what ſhould and may be done for thoſe unto whom it pretendeth: ſo *Paul* ſendeth him timeouſly and carefully, that is, preſently after his recovery: *I ſent him therefore the more carefully.*

carefully. 2. The weights and griefs of the godly do prove an occaſion of rejoycing afterwards; their evening of ſorrow, endeth in a morning of joy: So, the grief which theſe Philippians had, becauſe of their Paſtours ſickneſſe and apprehended death, endeth in joy, when they ſee him in health again: *that when ye ſee him again, ye may rejoyce.* 3. It will be ſomewhat burdenſome to an ingenuous ſpirit, whatever otherwayes be his ſtraits, that others ſhould ſuffer prejudice, and be at any loſſe by reaſon of their kindneſſe unto him: So it was matter of ſorrow unto *Paul*, that thoſe Philippians, becauſe of their reſpect unto him, were ſo long deprived of their own Miniſter: this was the ſorrow which he was to be eaſed of by his return: *that I may be the leſſe ſorrowfull.* 4. It is ſufficient for modeſt, ſubmiſſive, and exerciſed Chriſtians, to meet with ſome mitigation of their ſorrow, though it be not removed from them wholly: So *Paul* looks on this as ſatisfactory to him, that of the great weight of ſorrow and affliction, wherewith he was preſſed, a part was to be removed: *that I might be the leſſe ſorrowfull*, ſaith he.

Verſ. 29. *Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladneſs, and hold ſuch in reputation:*

From what he hath ſaid of *Epaphroditus*, he exhorteth them to receive him with all joy, and to give all due honour and reſpect unto him, and to ſuch Miniſters as he was. *Doct.* 1. The carriage or deportment of people towards faithful Miniſters, ſhould not be as unto private friends; but as to publick perſons repreſenting Chriſt, as ſent from Chriſt, and as Ambaſſadours in Chriſt's ſtead: for this is *to receive them in the Lord*, which *Paul* here commandeth. 2. There cannot a richer bleſſing be beſtowed upon a People, than that of a faithfull, painfull, and loving Miniſter; therefore *Paul* bids them *receive him with all gladneſſe*, as if he had been all the friends they had in the world reſtored unto them from death to life.

3. When the Lord doth bleſſe a People with ſuch a Miniſter, they ought to eſteem highly of him, as of a precious Jewell, and pearl of price; as they would not by their ingratitude and loathing contempt, provoke the Lord to plague them with his removall, *Matth.* 10.23. *hold ſuch in reputation*, or, eſteem of ſuch as precious. 4. As it is Satans great deſign, to bring a faithfull, painfull Miniſter to diſgrace and contempt, *Zech.* 3. 1. So it is the duty of all, who wiſh the thriving of piety, and the Church to be ſecured from profanity and errour, by all means to uphold the credite of that calling, together with the lawfull authority and due reſpect of theſe who carry themſelves faithfully in it: ſo *Paul* commandeth, *that ſuch be held in reputation.*

Verſ. 30. *Becauſe for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to ſupply your lack of ſervice toward me.*

He giveth a reaſon why they ought to receive him gladly, becauſe he had in a ſort miſ-regarded his life, and brought himſelf to the door of death, for the work of Chriſt, that is, by his watching, travell and pains taking, to miniſter unto *Paul* in his neceſſities, doing his utmoſt, that *Paul* ſhould want no neceſſary duty, no more than if all the Philippians had been preſent attending him; at whoſe direction he did what he did, and which they would have done themſelves, if they had been preſent. *Doct.* 1. Not only the preaching of the Word, but alſo the performance of the duties of humanity, civility, and charity unto thoſe who ſuffer for truth, is the work of Chriſt, and that, not only becauſe ſuch works are particularly injoyned by Chriſt, *Heb.* 13.3. but what is done unto any ſuch, is accompted done to him: See *Matth.* 25. 36.40. So *Epaphroditus* his attending upon *Paul* in priſon, is called, *the work of Chriſt.* 2. Then may a man have a good conſcience under his ſickneſſe and bodily infirmities, yea, and death it ſelf, when his well-ordered zeal

zeal for Christ, hath brought them on: for, *Epaphroditus* is here commended, that *for the work of Christ he was near unto death*; he had no evill conscience therefore in bringing sickneſſe upon himself. 3. However God loveth mercy better than sacrifice, and willeth no man fooliſhly and raſhly to be prodigall of his own life and health, no not under pretence of doing ſervice unto him, 1 *Tim.* 5.23. Yet there are ſome caſes, wherein he calleth men to the performance of ſome duties, and which they ſhould be willing to go about, although they ſhould evidently perceive moſt certain hazard of life and health to enſue thereby: ſuch are the duties of owning thoſe who ſuffer for Chriſt, contributing to the ſupply of their outward neceſſities, when they cannot be ſupplied otherwayes, the faithfull diſcharging of any publick imployment, wherein we are intruſted: thoſe were the duties, for performance whereof, *Epaphroditus* regarded not his life, wherein he is here commended, *for the work of Chriſt he regarded not his life to ſupply your lack of ſervice.* 4. As it ſometimes falleth out, that through diſtance of place, or other inſuperable difficulties, the children of God cannot manifeſt that cordiall affection by their own preſence and perſonall attendance, which they carry unto thoſe who ſuffer for truth: ſo they ought to ſupply that in-lack, ſo far as is poſſible by others, who, repreſenting them, may go about theſe duties of humanity and charity, in their name: Thus there was no want of affection in theſe Philippians toward *Paul*, onely there was *a lack of ſervice*, they not being able, though otherwayes willing to attend him becauſe of diſtance of place, and they direct their Paſtour to ſupply this *lack of their ſervice towards him.*

CHAP. III.

IN the firſt part of this Chapter, having premitted an exhortation to rejoyce in the Lord Chriſt, v. 1. he exhorteth them to beware of falſe teachers, who gloried in circumciſion, v. 2. ſhewing, that not they, but he, and other true believers had right to that title, v. 3.

In the ſecond part, being to oppoſe his own practice, to their dangerous opinions in the matter of Juſtification, he ſheweth, he had as much to boaſt of, as they, v. 4. which he inſtanceth in eight privileges, v. 5, 6. In none whereof he did now place any confidence, v. 7. nor yet upon any thing imaginary, without Chriſt; confirming this his reſolution & practice, by ſhewing the advantages to be hereby gained, namely, 1. acceſs to Chriſt, v. 8. Secondly, his being judged, not according to his own righteouſneſſe, but Chriſt's, v. 9. Thirdly, experimentall knowledge of the worth and power which is in Chriſt, v. 10. And fourthly, his attaining to the glorious reſurrection of the juſt, v. 11. And obviateth a miſtake, ſhewing he had not yet attained unto perfection in the knowledge of, and conformity with Chriſt; but that it was his aim, v. 12. which he inlargeth and cleareth by a ſimilitude taken from runners, v. 13, and 14.

In the third part, he exhorteth them to follow his example, leaving place for God to give a more full manifeſtation of any thing which was doubtſome, v. 15. providing they did walk peaceably and tenderly, v. 16. and ſo having repeated the exhortation, v. 17. he inforceth it, becauſe 1. there were many, whoſe example was not to be followed, to wit, the falſe Apoſtles, whom he ſetteth forth in their blackeſt colours, v. 18, 19, Secondly, his own example was worth the following, v. 20. and he, with ſuch as he was, to be rewarded gloriouſly, v. 21.

Verſ.

Verſ. 1. *Finally, my Brethren, rejoyce in the Lord. To write the ſame things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is ſafe.*

THat he may guard thoſe Philippians againſt the Errors of the falſe Teachers in the doctrine of juſtification, he premits an exhortation *to rejoyce in the Lord Chriſt*, as the author, purchaſer, and worker out of their ſalvation, and all their other happineſſe; excuſing himſelf for his often inculcating of the following admonition, becauſe it was not weariſome unto him, nor yet unprofitable for them. *Doct.* 1. Unity in judgment and affection would be ſo preſſed upon us by others, and endeavoured by our ſelves, as not to prejudge the purity of doctrine: for, having preſſed unity, chap. 2. he preſſeth purity of doctrine as much in this. 2. According as people are tainted with, or tempted unto Error, ſo ſhould Miniſters be more or leſſe in the publick refutation of it: Thus the Apoſtle, writing to the Galatians, entereth a juſt diſpute with the falſe Apoſtles, urging reaſons, and anſwering objections, becauſe many in that Church were already ſeduced by them, *Gal.* 3. 1. But here, becauſe the Philippians were only tempted unto, and not much overtaken with Error, he doth not ſo much diſpute, as admoniſh and exhort. 3. To rejoyce in Chriſt, that is, to keep our hearts affected towards him, and the doctrine which ſpeaketh of him, to be conſtantly and with delight making our recourſe unto him, and imploying him as the author, procurer, and worker out of all our happineſſe here and hereafter, is a choice guard againſt any Error, which is contrary unto thoſe Truths relating to him: for, the Apoſtle being to guard againſt Errors in the doctrine of juſtification, premitteth this as a foundation to the whole work, *rejoyce in the Lord.* 4. It is not ſufficient to know what Jeſus Chriſt is, what he hath done for us, or what uſe may, and ſhould be made of him; except that the knowledge which we have of him do produce ſuitable affections in

the heart towards him: for, having made Chriſt known, chap. 2 v. 6, &c. he inferreth from thence with a *finally* that their hearts ſhould *rejoyce in him*, the word ſaith as much as there remaining one thing yet neceſſary. 5. The often repeating and frequent inculcating of ſuch points of Truth as are moſt for edification of the hearers, ought neither to be burdenſome to a Miniſter, nor yet wearied of by the people: ſo, to inculcate often the following admonition was not *grievous unto* Paul, neither were they to weary of it, *becauſe unto them it was ſafe.* 6. Temptations unto Error; for, the moſt part are covered over with ſuch pious pretences, *Col.* 2. 23. and lovely baits, *Gal.* 6. 12. that there is need of many guards and frequent warnings to keep them off; ſo the Apoſtle thinketh it neceſſary to reiterat again and again, both by preaching while he was preſent, and now by Letter while he is abſent, this following exhortation, To beware of falſe-Teachers: *But for you it is ſafe.*

Verſ. 2. *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the conciſion.*

He exhorteth them particularly to beware of falſe-teachers, who did labour to conjoyn, in the matter of juſtification, the righteouſneſſe of works with that righteouſneſſe which is of Chriſt by faith; whom he calleth, firſt, *Dogs*, becauſe of their barking againſt the ſincere Doctrine of the Goſpel, and their railing againſt the orthodox Preachers thereof; and this all, to get wherewith to ſatisfie their unſatiable greed. Secondly, *Evil workers*; becauſe under pretence of working well to eſtabliſh Truth, and build up the Church, they did what in them lay to deſtroy them both, and were men of wicked lives, ver. 19. However they pretended much zeal for the Law of *Moſes*, and good works. Thirdly, *Conciſion*, alluding to Circumciſion, whereof they gave out themſelves to be Patrons and defenders, and deſigned themſelves by it, *Gal.* 2. 12. which name he taketh from them, as being

ing unworthy of it, and calleth them *conciſion*, as it were, the deſtroyers and renters of the Church. *Doct.* 1. There ought to be a ſpirit of wiſe and godly zeal in faithfull Preachers, againſt the ſpreaders of Errors, how great ſoever their reputation be among the people: ſo *Paul* calleth them *Dogs*, *&c.* 2. That Miniſters may guard the Lords People againſt ſeducers, they would labour to undeceive them, by taking off the vizard of piety, zeal, and other ſeeming vertues, under which the ſpreaders of Errors do uſually lurk, that ſo they may be ſeen in their own colours; thus they pretended to puritie, to be patrons of good works, and upholders of Circumciſion, one of God's Ordinances; and the Apoſtle taking off the vizard, calleth them prophane *dogs*, *evil workers*, and *conciſion*, or, Church-renters, under pretence of pleading for a divine Ordinance. 3. It is the Duty of the Lords People to know and diſcern thoſe who preach Truth, from thoſe who preach Error, that they may cleave to the one and flee from the other: *beware of dogs*; the word ſignifieth *ſee*, and know them; and from knowledge, eſchew them. 4. It is not unbeſeeming piety, to uſe merry words, witty and pleaſant alluſions; yea, and upon ſome occaſions, piercing jeſts or taunts; providing alwaies there be no ſcurrility or baſeneſſe, *Eph.* 5. 4. for, as often elſewhere, 1 *King.* 18. 27. So the Spirit of God here maketh uſe of ſuch, while alluding to Circumciſion, he calleth them *Conciſion*, giving them a name like in ſound, but much different in the uſual ſignification, and as much to their diſadvantage.

Verſ. 3. *For we are the Circumciſion, which worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoyce in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.*

He giveth a reaſon why he did not daign them with the name of Circumciſion; becauſe not they, but he, and true Believers had right to that title, they only having the thing ſignified by circumciſion, whereof he maketh

three parts: firſt, Worſhipping God with the inward and ſpiritual affections of a renewed heart: Secondly, Confiding in Chriſt alone for ſalvation, as being the ſubſtance of all theſe ſhadows: Thirdly, A denying of confidence in any of theſe fleſhly priviledges, or in any thing but Chriſt. *Doct.* 1. Though fair pretences to piety and purity of Worſhip be alwaies on the ſide of thoſe who erre from Truth, *Matth.*7.15. yet the reality of that piety unto which they pretend, is frequently to be found in thoſe who oppoſe them moſt: ſo was it here, *We are the Circumciſion*; that is, we have the reality of that Ordinance; and they only a pretence unto, and ſhadow of it. 2. Circumciſion, and the reſt of thoſe Levitical Ordinances may be ſaid in ſome ſenſe yet to continue, in ſo far as the thing ſignified by them doth remain: for, therefore *Paul* calleth true Believers the Circumciſion, becauſe they had the thing ſignified by it, *We are the Circumciſion, who ſerve God in the ſpirit.* 3. Circumciſion was inſtituted for this end, that by the outward cutting off the fleſh the People of God might be carried on; firſt, To cut off the ſinful fleſhly affections of their heart, that ſo with renewed ſpirits they might ſerve God. And ſecondly, To lay hold on the blood of the promiſed Meſſias for pardon of ſin, and ſalvation: for, *Paul* mentioneth thoſe two as the thing ſignified by Circumciſion, *We worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoyce in Jeſus Chriſt.* 4. Though it was ſufficient for *Paul* to oppoſe the inward Worſhip of the heart to the practice of Circumciſion, once an Ordinance, but now aboliſhed; yet it followeth not that outward Ordinances, while ſtanding in force, may upon that accompt be wholly neglected, *Gen.* 17.14. for if the outward rite of Circumciſion had been yet in force, his pretending to the thing ſignified, would not have juſtified his omiſſion of it. 5. External performance of commanded Worſhip, without inward exerciſe of the ſpirit in faith, love, hope, and mortification of fleſhly luſts by the power of Gods Spirit, is ſcarce worthy of the name of Worſhip to God, neither will it be owned by him as ſuch:

ſuch: for, it is this exerciſe of the ſpirit unto which *Paul* giveth the name of true Worſhip; *We are the circumciſion, which ſerve God in the ſpirit.* 6. We ſhould ſo go about commanded Duties in ſpirit and truth, as not to reſt upon, or glory in them, but in Chriſt alone and his righteouſneſſe, as the only meritorious cauſe of our ſalvation: So, though they worſhipped God in the ſpirit; *yet we rejoyce in Chriſt Jeſus*, ſaith he. 7. Confidence in Chriſt for ſalvation, and upon any other thing beſides him; ſuch as are outward priviledges, external performances, are ſo inconſiſtent with, and oppoſite to one another, that if the one be, the other cannot be: ſo *Paul* oppoſeth them here; *We rejoyce in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.*

Verſ. 4. *Though I might alſo have confidence in the fleſh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he may truſt in the fleſh, I more.*

The Apoſtle in the ſecond part of the chapter, being to demonſtrate the vanity of relying upon any thing beſides Chriſt in the point of juſtification, from his own practice, ſheweth; 1. That he had as much to boaſt of, upon the accompt of outward priviledges, as any of his adverſaries; yea, or any other whatſomever, if he had found it ſafe to venture his ſalvation on ſuch a bottom; and this he declareth, firſt, in general in this verſe. *Doct.* 1. The Lord in his deep wiſdom raiſeth up ſuch, as are moſt fit to oppoſe ſeducers, who come not ſhort of them in any thing whereof they glory moſt; that even wherein they glory they may be found but as others: ſee 2 *Cor.* 11. 12. Thus, againſt thoſe who boaſted ſo much in their outward priviledges, as to oppoſe them unto Chriſt's righteouſneſſe in the matter of juſtification, he raiſeth up Paul to batter down both their pride and error, who had as much matter of boaſting that way as they, or any other: *Though I might have alſo confidence in the fleſh.* 2. Then may a man commend himſelf by making notour what he

he hath of graces, parts, or priviledges, equally with, or above others, when his doing ſo tendeth to beat down the vain glory of thoſe who boaſt more of what they are than is meet: for, Paul here declareth at length his outward priviledges, wherein he would yeeld to none: which he could not have done without oſtentation, except it had been to ſhew the vanity and pride of his adverſaries. 3. The glory and praiſe of ſafety from Gods wrath, which men do promiſe unto themſelves from their parts or priviledges, as they are oppoſed unto Chriſt, is not ſo much in reality as in mens own conceipt and fancie; therefore, he ſaith not, If any other man *hath*, but, *if he think he hath whereof he might truſt in the fleſh.*

Verſ. 5. *Circumciſed the eighth day, of the ſtock of Iſrael, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the Law, a Phariſee:*

6. *Concerning zeal, perſecuting the Church: touching the righteouſneſſe which is in the Law, blameleſſe.*

What he ſpake in general of his ceding to none in thoſe things, whereof his adverſaries boaſted moſt, he maketh now to appear by reckoning forth eight priviledges. As firſt, he *was circumciſed*, and ſo a member of the Church, *Gen.* 17. 11. Secondly, *The eighth day*, to wit, after his birth, and ſo no Proſelyte or Convert from among the Gentiles, *Exod.* 12. 48. Thirdly, *Of the ſtock of Iſrael*, and ſo not the ſon of a Proſelyte, who uſed to be circumciſed the eighth day, *Gen.* 17. 12. Fourthly, *Of the tribe of Benjamin*; whereby he ſheweth the certainty of the former, by pointing at his particular tribe; as alſo the nobility of his race; the firſt King of Iſrael being of that tribe, 1 *Sam.* 10. 20, 21. And that he came of that tribe, which with the tribe of Judah clave to the houſe of *David*, and the true Worſhip of God at Jeruſalem, after the revolt of the ten Tribes. Fifthly, *An Hebrew of the Hebrews*, to ſhew his deſcent from *Abraham*, called *the Hebrew*, *Gen.* 14. 13. without any mixture of blood by

by marriage with forreign Nations, which might be exactly known by their publick Regiſters, wherein was marked the ſeveral deſcents of particular families, *Ezra.* 2.62. Sixthly, *As touching the Law, a Phariſee*, and ſo for his profeſſion moſt ſtrict; the ſect of the Phariſees pretending to more ſtrictneſſe than any other: ſee *Act.* 26.5. Seventhly, For his zeal to the Law he was moſt fervent, and ſo, that without reſpect of perſons *he perſecuted the Chriſtian Church*, who were looked upon as deſtroyers of the Law. And eighthly, As to his perſonal obedience unto the Law, *his converſation was blameleſſe*; he could not be juſtly taxed by men, who ſee no further than the outſide, 1 *Sam.* 16.7. *Doct.* 1. Thoſe things which natural men, eſpecially the finer ſort of hypocrites, rely upon, before they come to Chriſt, are ſuch, as are here reckoned forth, and may be reduced unto three heads; firſt, Church priviledges; ſuch were the firſt five. Secondly, Strictneſſe and zeal in profeſſion; ſuch were the ſixt and ſeventh. Thirdly, A life free from ſcandal, and as to men, blameleſſe; ſuch was the eigth: for *Paul* mentioneth all thoſe, as props whereupon men who are deſtitute of Chriſt do rely; yea, and himſelf did once place his confidence in them, as appears from v. 7. *Thoſe things were gain unto me. Doct.* 2. A profeſſion of more than ordinary ſtrictneſſe in religious obſervances, is no infallible mark of grace: for, natural men without Chriſt, yea Church-renters and dividing Sects, ſuch as were the Phariſees, may pretend to it: So *Paul* once, to wit, when he was out of Chriſt, and a renter and perſecuter of the Church, boaſted in this, That he was a Phariſee, that is, one of that Sect, which pretended to more nor ordinary ſtrictneſſe. 3. Where men do once engage themſelves in Sects and Schiſms, their furious zeal will drive them on to proſecute their neareſt relations, and thoſe who have neareſt intereſt in Chriſt, if they oppoſe themſelves to their damnable Errors; and to place the very ſubſtance of Religion, and of doing ſervice unto God, in their perſecuting of them: So Paul being a Schiſmatick Phariſee,

did

did perſecute all who were of the Church without diſtinction; and mentioneth his ſo doing, as one prop of his confidence and boaſting, before he came to Chriſt; *concerning zeal, perſecuting the Church.* 4. Natural men, yea bloody perſecutors may attain to freedom from any outward vice, and to ſuch a converſation as will be in the ſight of men altogether blameleſſe: So Paul, even when perſecuting the Church he was, as *touching the righteouſneſſe which is of the Law, blameleſſe.*

Verſ. 7. *But what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſſe for Chriſt.*

Having ſhown what he had to boaſt of, he declareth his eſteem of all thoſe things, to wit, That however when he was in an unconverted ſtate he relied upon them for ſalvation as much as any other; yet now, having ſeen nothing would redownd unto him therby, but a real hurt & damage, he had taken his confidence from off them, and wholly placed it on Chriſt. *Doct.* 1. It is a matter of great difficulty for any man, eſpecially in an unconverted eſtate, to excell in parts, priviledges, or in a blameleſſe life beyond others; and not rely on them, as that which will bring them to Heaven; and ſo in effect put them in Chriſt's place; for, *thoſe things were gain to* Paul; he thought to merit Heaven by them. 2. Whatever a man doth rely upon without, or beſides Chriſt for righteouſneſſe and ſalvation, he will, when rightly enlightned, ſee a reall loſſe and hurt to be in it: So, *thoſe things were counted loſſe by* Paul; becauſe not only they could not effectuate that for which he did rely upon them; but alſo his confidence in them, and the eſteem which he had of them, impeded him much from coming to Chriſt, *thoſe I counted loſſe.* 3. There is that in Chriſt, and only in him, wherein a ſoul throughly touched with the ſight of ſin and deſerved wrath, will find full and ſolid ſatisfaction in order to righteouſneſſe and ſalvation: So Paul, being thus touched, *Act.* 9. 6. taketh his confidence from off all thoſe things, placing it only on Chriſt: *he counted*

them

them losse for Christ; that is, that he might know him, gain him, and be found in him, being cloathed with his righteousnesse, as he explaineth afterwards.

Vers. 8. *Yea doubtlesse, and I count all things but losse, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the losse of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.*

What he hath presently spoken of, taking his confidence from any thing in himself, and placing it wholly upon Christ, he repeateth again and again, and extendeth it also to all things imaginable without Christ: which things however in themselves excellent, yet being compared with excellent Christ, (and as to the point of placing confidence upon them) were but losse and damage unto him: and however the taking of his confidence from off them, was difficult for him, and a very suffering upon his part, yet he had done it, and in the mean time did not repent himself of it, counting them as very dung in the fore-mentioned respects; and this all, that he might gain Christ. *Doct.* 1. In the matter of our justification before God, we are not only not to rely upon our Church-privileges, or our works seemingly good before conversion; but also are not to place our confidence even in these works which are really good, as being wrought in us by the Spirit of God after our conversion: for *Paul* maketh his speech to rise from those things which he had, being yet in nature to all things, even not excepting those which he had, being now converted, although before that time he had done many things, which were really good, *Yea doubtlesse, I count* (in the present time) *all things losse.* 2. Before a man do quite his own righteousnesse, and all his other props of vain confidence, to rely wholly upon Christ, he must first know somewhat of Christ's worth and sufficiencie to do his turn; so *Paul* hath some knowledge of a matchlesse excellencie in Christ, which serveth as a motive to make him undervalue all other things, to be at him: *for the excellencie of*

the

the knowledge, &c. 3. The bare knowledge of Chriſt's excellencie and worth, is not ſufficient for righteouſneſſe and ſalvation, except the heart by faith faſten upon, and adhere to him, being ſo known: for, the word *knowledge*, according to the cuſtome of the Hebrew language includeth the acts of the will, and affections following upon it, *Pſal.* 1.6. and ſo it is afterward expounded in theſe words, *that I may gain him, be found in him, having his righteouſneſſe.* 4. He that hath taken his confidence from off his own righteouſneſſe, and placed it wholly upon Chriſt, may and ſhould plead intereſt in Chriſt, and boaſt of him as his: ſo doth *Paul*; *the knowledge of Chriſt my Lord.* 5. A man will not attain to quit his own righteouſneſſe, and his other props of vain confidence, to be-take himſelf wholly unto Chriſt, untill he be made to do it: the Law and a wakened conſcience muſt drive him out of thoſe lurkin holes, before he quit them, *Rom.* 7.9. hence, he ſaith, *for whom I have ſuffered the loſſe of all things*, that is, as the merchant ſuffereth the loſſe of his goods, by caſting them away in the time of a ſtorm, which is ſore againſt his heart if he could do otherwayes and were not through fear of the loſſe of his life driven unto it: the originall word ſignifieth ſuch a ſuffering of loſſe as this. 6. So excellent is Chriſt, that all things compared with him, and ſet in oppoſition to him, have that much of baſeneſſe in them, that hardly a word baſe enough can be found to expreſſe them: ſo, he counteth, even *all things*, compared with, and oppoſed to him, *not only loſſe, but dung.* 7. So compleat is that ſatisfaction which is to be found in Chriſt, when he is throughly ventured upon for righteouſneſſe and ſalvation, that the man which hath ſo done, needs not, yea, will not repent himſelf of ſo doing; or, for under-valuing, quiting, and trampling upon every thing which impeded him from cloſing with him: for, *Paul*, who had ſuffered the loſſe of all things for him, taking a review of what he had done, ſeeth no reaſon to recede from it; and herefore in the mean time ſaith, *I do count them but dung.*

8. Our

8. Our cloſing with Chriſt by faith for righteouſneſſe and ſalvation, having denyed confidence unto any other thing beſides him, is a grace, the acts whereof would be often repeated, avowed and ſtood to; becauſe it groweth and riſeth higher the more it is exerciſed: So *Paul* in theſe two Verſes, repeateth it thrice, and his ſpeech doth ſtill riſe by degrees; *thoſe I counted loſſe, yea, I count all things but loſſe, and do count them but dung*, ſaith he. 9. There is no gaining of Chriſt and his righteouſneſſe, except we renounce our own firſt: and the more of loſſe and damage we ſee in our own works, parts and privileges, the more fully and freely the heart be taken off from relying on thoſe, there is the more ready acceſſe to cloſe with Chriſt; and thereby, to get all that is in him made our own: for, *Paul*, by counting all thoſe loſſe, and not otherwayes, gaineth Chriſt: *that I may gain Chriſt.*

Verſ. 9. *And be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſſe, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſſe which is of God by faith:*

He hath ſhewen one advantage by renouncing confidence in himſelf, to wit, his gaining Chriſt: here is a ſecond, that hereby in the day, when God ſhall ſearch ſinners, chiefly in the day of generall judgement, he ſhould be found by God, incorporated in Chriſt; and ſentence ſhould paſſe upon him, not according to his own inherent righteouſneſſe, which conſiſteth in perſonall obedience unto the law, but according to that imputed righteouſneſſe of Chriſt's, freely gifted by God, and received by faith. *Doct.* 1. It ſhall go well with thoſe, and thoſe only, in the day of exact ſearch and tryall, eſpecially in the day of generall judgement, who ſhall be found in Chriſt: for, this is the great advantage of his counting all things loſſe, *that I may be found in Chriſt.* 2. Whoever hath once ſincerely cloſed with Chriſt by faith, ſhall conſtantly remain united to, and ingrafted in him: for,

for, the Apoſtle ſupponeth, that once having gained Chriſt, he ſhall be found in him at the laſt day: *and be found in him.* 3. As there is no compearing before God in the great day to a man's own ſafety and comfort, without ſome righteouſneſſe of one ſort or other; ſo there is no inherent righteouſneſſe conſiſting in a man's own perſonal obedience unto the Law, which can ſecure him from the dint of God's anger and juſtice: therefore ſaith he, *not having mine own righteouſneſſe, which is of the law,* that is, not relying on it, as that which would commend him to God: and all righteouſneſſe inherent, even that which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, is called *our own,* becauſe it is really in us, 2 *Pet.* 1. 8. and we our ſelves, being wrought upon by God, do really concur for the working of it, v. 12. 4. Not only works done in obedience to the Ceremoniall Law, or by men in their unrenewed ſtate, are uſeleſſe, as to the juſtification of a ſinner; but even thoſe alſo, which are performed by the truly godly and regenerate, in obedience to the Morall Law: for, *Paul* quiteth all that righteouſneſſe, which could be called *his* in the mean time, when he had been now of a long time renewed: *not having mine own righteouſneſſe.* 5. That righteouſneſſe which can ſufficiently ſecure a man in the great day, from the dint of God's wrath and juſtice, is onely Chriſt's, to wit, that righteouſneſſe which was inherent onely in him, and but imputed unto us, *Rom.* 5. 19. *That which is through the faith of Chriſt,* ſaith he; that is, faith laying hold on Chriſt. 6. This righteouſneſſe which can ſecure a loſt ſinner from the ſtroak of juſtice, hath relation unto God in a particular manner, as being the righteouſneſſe of that Perſon, who is God, *Jer.* 23. 6. that onely righteouſneſſe which is accepted of God, *Matth.* 3. 17. and the imputation whereof to unrighteous ſinners, being found out by the onely wiſe God, *Matth.* 11. 25. *The righteouſneſſe which is of God.* 7. There is no gain to be had from this righteouſneſſe, by a loſt ſinner, except he lay hold on it by faith: therefore it's called *the righteouſneſſe which is of God by faith,*

faith. 8. The grace of faith, doth juſtifie, and make a ſinner righteous, not as it is our work: for, ſo it is a part of our righteouſneſſe which is by the Law; ſeeing the Law commandeth faith, 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. but as it apprehendeth Jeſus Chriſt and his righteouſneſſe: *not having mine own righteouſneſs by the Law, but that which is of God by faith,* ſaith he.

Verſ. 10. *That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death.*

A third advantage to be reaped by renouncing confidence in all things without Chriſt, is, That hereby he ſhould, and in part did experimentally, know the worth that is in Chriſt, and find the power of his reſurrection, raiſing him from the death of ſin to the life of grace, as alſo ſomwhat of that comfort and joy which is in ſuffering for him, and with him in his myſtical body; and ſo ſhould be made conform to Chriſts death, as holding forth a reſemblance of it. *Doct.* 1. Beſides that knowledge of faith which Believers have of Chriſt, whereby credit is given to the Word, becauſe of the authority of him whoſe Word it is, *Joh.* 20. 29. there is an experimental knowledge, whereby Believers, from his effectual working in them, do find and taſt him to be that which the Word affirmeth of him, *Pſal.* 34. 8. It is the knowledge the Apoſtle here aſpireth unto, *that I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection.* 2. The more a man attaineth to ſee the loſſe and vanity of all things without, and in compariſon with Chriſt, and to rely wholly upon Chriſt, He will attain to the more experimental knowledge and lively ſenſe of the worth and power which is in Chriſt; for this is one advantage which he reapeth by counting all things loſſe for Chriſt: *that I may know him,* to wit, experimentally. 3. To rely wholly upon the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt for juſtification, and nothing at all upon our own, conduceth much to the increaſe of holineſſe,

and in no wayes doth prejudge it, *Rom.* 3. 31. for, the fruit of not having his own righteouſneſſe, but Chriſts, is his knowing by experience the vertue of Chriſts reſurrection, in raiſing him from the death of ſin to the life of grace: *and the power of his reſurrection.* 4. The ſufferings which Believers do undergo for Chriſt, and for his Church, are a partaking with Chriſt in thoſe his ſufferings which he ſtill endureth in his myſtical body, the Church: for, ſo much is taught by thoſe words, *the fellowſhip of his ſufferings*, to wit, which he endureth in his myſtical body, the Church; ſee *Col.* 1. 24. 5. As juſtified perſons are not exempted from ſad ſufferings, ſuch as others of Chriſts myſtical body, the Church, are exerciſed with; ſo they enjoy a deſirable ſweetneſſe in them when they meet with them: *Paul* expecteth this, elſe he would not have deſired *to know the fellowſhip of his ſufferings.* 6. The experience and taſt of this deſirable ſweetneſſe, is only felt by him, who by denying his own righteouſneſſe, and laying hold upon the imputed righteouſneſſe of Chriſt, hath made his peace with God: for, the fruit of *Paul's* counting all things loſſe to gain Chriſt, is his knowing by experience that ſweetneſſe which is in *the communion of his ſufferings.* 7. An holy man patiently undergoing a croſſe for Chriſt, is an evident reſemblance of Chriſts death, who notwithſtanding that he was ſorely aſſualted by men, *Luk.* 4. 29. and Devils, *Matth.* 4. 3. Yet remained holy, harmleſſe, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners, *Iſa.* 53. 9. preferring his Fathers glory, and good of Believers, to his own eaſe and immunity from ſufferings, *Matth.* 26. 39. So *Paul*, by partaking of his ſufferings, ſhould be made *conform to his death.* 8. This may make the moſt bitter croſſe lovely, and, in a ſort, deſirable unto an unholy man, that hereby he is made the more like unto his Lord and Maſter: for, this maketh *Paul* aim at the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, even that thereby he was to be *made conformable unto his death.*

Verſ.

Verſ. 11: *If by any means I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead.*

Here is a fourth advantage to be reaped by renouncing confidence in all things but Chriſt, to wit, hereby, and by exerciſing himſelf in holineſſe, and patient ſuffering for Chriſt (whereof ver. 10.) he ſhould, though with much difficulty, attain unto the glorious reſurrection of the Juſt, and have his portion in it: for, he meaneth here the reſurrection proper to Believers only, as 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 14, &c. *Doct.* 1. The gain of cloſing with Chriſt and his righteouſneſſe, reacheth further than to any thing within time; it accompanieth a man in death, preſerveth his duſt in the grave until the laſt day; at the which time it ſhall raiſe him up, and make him partaker of the glorious reſurrection of the Juſt: for, *Paul* propoundeth all this unto himſelf, as the fruit of his cloſing with Chriſt, while he ſaith, *I may attain unto the reſurrection of the dead.* 2. However our cloſing with Chriſts righteouſneſſe by faith giveth a right to, and an intereſt in that bleſſed reſurrection, and all the glory which is then to be imparted unto Believers, *Joh.* 3. 36. Yet there is a way of holineſſe, and patient enduring of the croſſe, by which Believers muſt walk unto it: for, he propoundeth the knowledge of Chriſts reſurrection, and fellowſhip of his ſufferings, ver. 10. as the way leading to it: *If by any means, &c.* 3. As there is no ſmall difficulty for any of the loſt ſons of *Adam*, to attain unto this bleſſed reſurrection; ſo where the reality of it is believed, difficulties will but kindle deſire, and quicken our diligence to be at it: for, the Apoſtle, *If by any means*, importeth not his doubt of the thing, or of his partaking of it; only hereby he would ſet out the great difficulty of attaining unto it, together with his ardent deſire, and unwearied diligence to be at it: *If by any means*, ſaith he.

Vers. 12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

Having shown the advantage flowing from closing with Christ, he holdeth forth more of his own practice, and thereby sheweth the duty of a man already ingrafted in Christ, which is, from the sense of his own shortcoming in the knowledge of Christ, his imperfection in grace, and conformity with Christ to endeavour constant progresse, and to aim at no lesse than perfection in all those; that being the scope which the Believer is called to aim at, when he is first laid hold upon by Christ in his effectual calling. Now the Apostle propoundeth this his practice to obviate a mistake which might arise from his former speech, as if he had been perfectly instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and fully conform unto him already, and so needed not to busie himself about Christ further, but might aspire after an higher perfection by conformity with the Ceremonial Law, as the false Apostles did. *Doct.* 1. So ingenious is Error and apt to lay hold upon any thing which may make for its own defence, that it will take advantage to shelter it self by that which is spoken in direct refutation of it: for, as is said, *Paul* seeth a necessity to guard what he hath presently spoken against the urgers of Circumcision, lest thereby they should have fastened upon him that which would have made for their advantage, *Not as if I had already attained*, saith he. 2. They who have made greatest progresse in the knowledge of Christ, and in conformity with him, are far short of what they should be: so was *Paul*, *Not as though I had already attained.* 3. Believers ought to be sensible of this their imperfection, and sometimes also acknowledge it; that hereby they may be kept humble, made to aspire unto further growth; and others may be preserved from dangerous mistakes of them,

them, or of the high eſteem which otherwayes they may ſeem to have of themſelves: ſo doth *Paul*, *not that I have already attained.* 4. Then are we rightly ſenſible of our falling-ſhort of what we ſhould be, when we are not thereby diſcouraged, but rather incited to make ſwifter progreſſe toward the mark; *but I follow after*, ſaith he. 5. Though perfection in holineſſe be not attainable in this life, yet we are to aim at no leſſe: *Paul followed after, that he might apprehend*, to wit, that perfection which was yet wanting. 6. That there is any motion towards that which is ſpiritually good, proceedeth wholly from Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe grace doth firſt lay hold upon us in our effectuall calling, when we were dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, *Epheſ.* 2. 1. and having infuſed principles of a new life in us, we are made to beſtir our ſelves in the way of holineſſe: *Paul* is firſt *apprehended of Chriſt*, and then he *followeth after to apprehend.*

Verſ. 13. *Brethren, I count not my ſelf to have apprehended; but this one thing* I do, *forgetting thoſe things which are behinde, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before.*

14. *I preſſe toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.*

He doth again acknowledge his own ſhort-coming, and ſheweth alſo his conſtant endeavour after perfection, which he inlargeth and cleareth by a ſimilitude taken from runners in a race, who, without looking behinde, to count how much of the way is already paſt, as carryed on with ſuch a vehement deſire to promove in the way, that they bend their bodies forward, having their heart, eye, and whole courſe, ſtreight toward the end of the race, untill they attain unto it: Thus was *Paul* carryed on in his chriſtian courſe, being incouraged by the hopes of the rich reward unto which he was called, and which was purchaſed for him by Jeſus Chriſt. *Doct.* 1. There is much divine wiſdome and prudence required in Mi-

niſters, as in all the duties of their calling, ſo eſpecially, while they are about to faſten conviction of guiltineſſe upon any; leſt they do irritate their corruptions in ſtead of curing them. Thus the Apoſtle wiſely points out the vanity of their conceit, who looked upon themſelves as having already attained unto perfection in the knowledge of Chriſt, not by his expreſſe taxing of their pride and vanity, but by profeſſing his own humility: *I count not my ſelf to have apprehended.* 2. They who have made furtheſt progreſſe in the knowledge of Chriſt, are uſually moſt ſenſible of their own imperfections, and moſt forward in the acknowledgement of them, when God's glory, and the edification of others call them unto it: So *Paul*, who (v. 10.) had nothing ſo much in his deſires as to know Chriſt, and ſo doubtleſſe knew much of him, yet ſtandeth not again and again to acknowledge his own ſhort-coming and ignorance: *I count not my ſelf to have apprehended.* 3. Progreſſe in the knowledge of Chriſt, and holineſſe is to be minded ſeriouſly and above all other things, not ſuperficially, and upon the by only: ſo it was *Paul's one thing: this one thing I mind*, or do. 4. The approved exerciſe of a Chriſtian endeavouring progreſſe in the way to Heaven, is much like to the carriage of thoſe who are running in a race. Firſt, as the runner caſteth not back his eye to reckon how much of the way is already paſt; ſo the Chriſtian who would advance to any purpoſe, though he may take a review of what he hath already done, ſo as therein not only to ſee his own ſhort-comings, for humiliation, but alſo to ſee matter of praiſe unto God, and incouragement unto himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10, Yet he is not ſo to be taken up with it, as to reſt upon it, be puffed up with conceit becauſe of it, as if he had already done enough, or any other way which may retard him in his further progreſſe: in which reſpects *Paul* did *forget thoſe things which were behinde*, as if he had done nothing. Secondly, as the runner is moſt taken up with that part of the way which he is yet to run, and bendeth himſelf forward in it: So the

Chri-

Chriſtian who would make progreſſe, muſt be much in counting what of his way is yet before him; what ſins are yet to be mortified; what duties are yet almoſt untouched; what hard exerciſes he may yet be called to undergo; and the more he ſeeth of that kind, he is to take the more pains for advancing forward: ſo was *Paul reaching forth unto thoſe things which were before.* Thirdly, as the runner holdeth his eye upon the mark, and ſteereth his whole courſe in order to it, without turning aſide, or, halting, becauſe of difficulties in the way: So the Chriſtian who would make progreſſe, muſt fix his eye upon the end of his race, which is perfection in holineſſe, levelling all his actions and endeavours at that mark, preſſing forward through all difficulties, diſcouragements and ſtumbling-blocks which are in the way betwixt him and it: So did *Paul; I preſſe toward the mark.* 4. As the thoughts of the prize and worth of the reward, do adde ſpirits to the runner, making him run more ſwiftly; ſo there is a rich prize, a free reward of grace, though not of merit, to wit, Heaven and glory, *Rom.* 6. 23. which the Chriſtian who would make progreſſe to purpoſe, ſhould have much in his thoughts; that thereby he may be heartned againſt all hardſhips and diſcouragements, faintings and failings, which he will be aſſaulted with, and tempted unto: So did *Paul*; *I preſſe for the prize of my high calling.* 5. Though Heaven and glory be given as a reward to thoſe onely, who continue in their chriſtian courſe, untill they come unto the end of the race; yet it is not merited by their running and perſevering: for, as it dependeth upon their effectuall calling, which hath not its riſe from man's low endeavours, but from above, even from God's high grace: ſo it is conveyed unto them through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt: thus it is *the prize of the high calling of God in Jeſus Chriſt.*

Verſ. 15, *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you.*

16. *Neverthelesse, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us minde the ſame thing.*

In the third part of the Chapter, he exhorteth even thoſe of them, who either had made, or ſeemed unto themſelves to have made furtheſt progreſſe, to follow his example, and be of the ſame mind with him in the particulars before-mentioned: and becauſe ſome of them, being ſeduced by the falſe Apoſtles, were of a contrary mind in ſome things, he giveth them ground of hope, that God, who had brought them to the knowledge of the Goſpel, would reclaim them from this their errour, and diſcover unto them the danger of it, v.15. but withall he exhorteth them unto unity and orderly walking, according to the Canon and rule of Scripture in thoſe things wherein they were yet harmonious, keeping mutuall love, and holding off further rents than were already made. *Doct.* 1. Though none can attain unto abſolute perfection in holineſſe, yet as there are ſeveral degrees in grace; ſo there is diverſitie of growth among Chriſtians; ſome are but weak, infirm, and babes in Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 3.1,2. others are come to greater ripeneſſe, indued with a larger meaſure of grace, and confirmed by much experience, who being compared with the former, are here called *perfect: Let us as many as be perfect.* 2. The greateſt perfection attainable in this life, is, to renounce all confidence in our ſelves, to rely wholly upon Chriſt, and from the ſenſe of our own imperfection in grace, to be conſtantly aſpiring to a greater meaſure: for, this he preſcribeth unto the choiceſt Chriſtians to be exerciſed in; *Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.* 3. The approven exerciſes of holy men mentioned in Scripture, are a clear glaſs, wherein we are to ſee our duty & ſtrong incouraging motives to make us go about it; examples being of more force, than bare and naked precepts: So *Paul* draweth an argument from his own practice: *Let*

us

us therefore, &c. that is, being ſenſible of ſmall progreſſe, and of a great way yet before us, let us preſſe forward: for, ſo was he minded, as he ſheweth in the preceding verſe, and ſo would he have them minded in this verſe. 4. There are uſually ſome within the viſible Church, who, being be-miſted with errour, do not come up to give through aſſent unto all divine truths: *Paul* ſupponeth ſo much; *if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded.* 5. We are to deal more tenderly with ſome of thoſe who are be-miſted with errour than with others; as 1. We are to keep charity towards them, and expreſſe our charity of them, that God who hath begun to inlighten them in other things, would diſcover unto them thoſe truths, whereof they are yet ignorant: ſuch is the Apoſtle's charity here, *God ſhall reveal even this unto you:* even this, as he had revealed other things already. Secondly, they are to be waited on patiently, without proceeding to the ſevere exerciſe of Diſcipline, untill ſome competent time at leaſt be given, wherein, through Gods bleſſing upon their own endeavours, and the labours of others with them, they may attain to the knowledge of thoſe truths, whereof they are ignorant; or otherwayes be made unexcuſable: This is ſupponed to have been *Paul's* mind toward thoſe to whom he ſpeaketh, *the Lord will reveal even this unto you. Doct.* 6. Every one who erreth from truth, is not to be uſed with this tenderneſſe; as 1. not ſeducers, but thoſe who are ſeduced: for, the Apoſtle hath ſpoken, v. 3. and doth ſpeak afterward otherwayes of ſeducers. Secondly, it is onely thoſe who are ſeduced, not in fundamentall truths, which are abſolutely neceſſary; but in others, which are not ſo neceſſary: for, the Apoſtle ſupponeth thoſe, whom he would have thus uſed, to have attained unto the knowledge of fundamentall truths according to the Canon of Scripture: *Neverthelеſſe in what we have attained, &c.* So that their errour did ly only in ſome circumſtantial truths, relating to thoſe greater ones; as he ſeemeth alſo to import, while he ſaith, *if in any thing, any be otherwiſe minded:* beſides that,

that it appeareth from the body of the Epiſtle, the falſe Apoſtles had prevailed with few or none in this Church to draw them on to their groſſeſt errours. Thirdly, as their errour is onely in inferiour truths; ſo, they muſt not be ſo devoted unto their own opinions, as, from a deſire to propagate them, to rent the Church, and make ſchiſmes in it: but, are to walk in a joynt and orderly practice with others in thoſe things wherein they do agree: not creating ſtrife and diviſion, whether in affection or practice, about thoſe things wherein they differ; for, this may be taken as a condition of the forbearance to be given, and of God's revealing further unto them: *Neverthelesſe*, or only *if we walk by the ſame rule, and mind the ſame thing*: So there is no ground here for a boundleſſe toleration of all hereticks, ſect-maſters, ſeducers of others; nor yet to all thoſe who are ſeduced; except their carriage do evidence them to be ſtudious both of truth and peace. *Doct.* 7. As it is onely God who can reveal truth unto thoſe who are over-taken with errour, by his bleſſing upon ordinary means, made uſe of for that purpoſe: ſo there are promiſing grounds of hope that he will do ſo unto ſome, to wit, thoſe unto whom he hath diſcovered many ſoul-ſaving truths already, and who are labouring by their orderly walking according unto thoſe truths, to edifie both themſelves and others: *Pauls* hope is, that *God will reveal even this unto them*; not by any immediate revelation, or any other way without the Word; but by his bleſſing upon the Word preached, and their own endeavours, *Iſa.* 8.20. And that becauſe he had revealed much unto them already, imported in the words *even this*, or, alſo this, and withall ſubjoyneth the condition, *whereunto we have attained, let us walk*, to wit, unitly and orderly, as ſouldiers keeping rank, without diſturbing one another. 7. The Church of Chriſt, ought not upon every difference of judgement, to be rent in Schiſmes and Factions, ſetting up a Church againſt a Church, or, uſing croſſe endeavours, for under-minding and down-bearing of one another;

another; but unity and orderly practice according to an uncontroverted rule, ſo far as is poſſible, is to be kept, notwithſtanding of different judgments: for this the Apoſtle exhorteth unto; *Let us walk by the ſame rule.* 8. Upon divided practice, becauſe of different opinions in a Church, there doth neceſſarily follow further diviſion and renting, both in judgment and affections: for, *Paul* having exhorted unto joynt practice, he ſubjoyneth, *Let us minde the ſame thing*, that is, Let us keep unity, both of affection and judgment, to wit, in thoſe things wherein we do yet agree; importing, this cannot be, except there be a joynt practice.

Verſ. 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an example.*

He repeateth the former exhortation, that they would follow his example; and encourageth them from this, That he was not his alone; many faithfull Servants of Chriſt did walk as he did; whoſe example he propoundeth unto them as a mark to aim at. *Doct.* 1. As the examples of holy men, regiſtred in Scripture, are to be imitated by us, to wit, ſo far as they have been followers of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. ſo we are to be *followers together of them*; every one helping up another, and far from falling in rents among our ſelves, under pretence of giving reſpect to men, ſome more to one, and others more to another, 1 *Cor.* 1. 12. this the Apoſtle aimeth at, while he ſaith, *be followers together of me.* 2. As there are ſome whoſe ſteps are to be followed, and whoſe way in order thereunto is to be diligently eyed, as the ſcope which the archer aimeth at; (for ſo the Greek word, rendered *Mark*, doth ſignifie) So, it is not every one we ſhould ſo imitate, but thoſe only who have walked in the ſteps of the holy Apoſtles, and other choice Servants of Chriſt: *Mark them*, ſaith he, *which walk ſo*, but how? *as ye have us for an example.* 3. However the way of God be in it ſelf lovely, and worthy to be choſen, *Pſal.* 19.

19. 7. though few or none did walk in it, *Josh.* 24. 15. yet, that this way is made a beaten path by the multitude of those who have made it their choice, is no small encouragement and motive to make us walk in it; every example being as a standing witness to confirm from experience, that all which Scripture speaketh of that way, is real truth, *Heb.* 12. 1. for, so he draweth an encouragement from this, That not only he, but divers others did walk in that way, *Mark them that walk so.*

Vers. 18. *(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping,* that they are *the enemies of the crosse of Christ:*

19. *Whose end* is *destruction, whose God* is *their belly; and whose glory is in their shame, who minde earthly things.)*

He giveth reasons to inforce the exhortation. 1. There were many, whose example was not to be followed, to wit, the false Apostles: From following of whom, that he may deter them, as he had often before, so he doth now in great grief (as seeing the Church of Christ pestered with such false Teachers) point them forth in their blackest colours: First, As being enemies to the crosse of Christ, because they opposed the vertue of Christ's sufferings, by which alone salvation is obtained, *Gal.* 5. 2. and because they pressed the observation of the Levitical Ceremonies, that, gratifying the Jews thereby, they might shift Christ's crosse, or persecution for the Gospel, *Gal.* 6. 12. Secondly, Eternal destruction should be their reward, if they persisted in that damnable doctrine, without repentance. Thirdly, They were beastly belly-gods, as being acted not from a principle of love to God, or to the salvation of men, but their own fleshly appetite, that they might have wherewith to fill their bellies, *Rom.* 16. 18. Fourthly, They gloried in their wickednesse, and in the multitude of these whom they had perverted, *Gal.* 6. 13. whereof they should rather have been ashamed, and which in the end should turn unto

their

their ſhame. And finally, all their endeavours reached no higher, than things earthly, riches, honour, pleaſures, applauſe, and ſuch like; while as Heaven, and things heavenly (however much pretended unto) were little minded by them: And ſo he leadeth them to gather, that ſuch were men not worthy to be followed. *Doct.* 1. The Lord doth ſometimes ſuffer Seducers to multiply in a Church, thus to puniſh the ſmall reſpect which hath been given to Truth, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 10, 11. and that thoſe who are approved, may be made manifeſt, 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. for, *many walk, &c.* 2. The abounding of ſuch Seducers ought not in reaſon to detract any thing from the reſpect which is due unto ſincere and orthodox Preachers; yea, ſuch will be the more eſteemed of by all ſincere lovers of truth: for. *Paul* maketh this a reaſon, why ſuch men as he ſhould be imitated; *Be followers together of me, &c.* v. 17. *for many walk*, ſaith he, *that are enemies, &c.* 3. It is the duty of Chriſt's faithful Miniſters to give frequent warning unto the Lord's People of their hazard from ſpreaders of Errors and wicked Seducers, pointing them out in the blackeſt colours, that people may not be inſnared by them: ſo doth *Paul* here; *Of whom I have told you, and now tell you, they are enemies of the croſſe of Chriſt.* 4. What ever Miniſters do of this kind, ought not to flow from hatred or evil-will to the perſons of men, a deſire of venting reproaches, petulancy of ſpirit, or ſuch like, *Jude* 9. but from pure zeal to the Churches weal, and from grief of heart to ſee the Church of Chriſt peſtered by them: thus was it with Paul; *of whom*, ſaith he, *I do now tell you, even weeping.* 4. In times of tryal for Truth, there will not be ſome wanting (and thoſe in no ſmall reputation for piety and parts) who are carried on to imbrace thoſe Opinions in the matter of Religion, which lie furtheſt off the dint of perſecution, even although theſe Opinions be erroneous and deſtructive to the doctrine of the Goſpel; for ſo, and in thoſe reſpects thoſe men were *enemies to the croſſe of Chriſt.* 5. Not only doth profanity and vice draw down deſtruction

and

and wrath upon thoſe who live in them, *Col.* 3. 6. but alſo Errors againſt Truth are damnable, and bring deſtruction, if not repented of, chiefly to the malicious authors and factious ſpreaders of them, for baſe deſigns, fairded over with fair pretences, *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. So ſaith the Apoſtle of thoſe maſters of Error, *whoſe end is deſtruction.* 6. That is interpretatively a mans God, which is the laſt end of all his actions, and upon which all his care, his thoughts and endeavours run moſt, whether it be a mans belly, the world, his credit or friends: hence it is ſaid, *whoſe God is their belly.* 7. There are many who pretend fair for God, and the good of ſouls, and yet will be really found to be but ſelf-ſeekers, making a net of a fair outſide, to catch worldly pleaſures, riches and honours: and this is moſt frequently to be found in thoſe who ſpread Errors; *Whoſe God is their belly, they minde earthly things.* 8. The chief endeavour of thoſe who walk in a ſinful way, (chiefly in a courſe of error) and the thing which they hunt moſt after, as their higheſt credit and glory, is, to have many carried along with them in it; for, this was their glory here ſpoken of; *whoſe glory is in their ſhame.* 9. The Lord ſhall ſooner or later make that ſame very thing, wherein ſuch men glory moſt, to be their ſhame, either by making them to be truly aſhamed of it, as a fruit of their repentance, *Rom.* 6. 21. or by rubbing ſhame upon them for it here, or hereafter, as the juſt reward of their ſin, *Hoſ.* 4. 7. in which reſpects he affirmeth of them, *whoſe glory is in their ſhame.*

Verſ. 20. *For our converſation is in Heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:*
21. *Who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.*

Here is a ſecond reaſon exciting them to imitate the Apoſtle and ſuch as he was. Their converſation and expected reward were much different from that of the falſe Apoſtles;

Apoſtles; and therefore as the latter were to be eſchewed, the former were to be followed. As to their converſation, it was not on things earthly, but in Heaven, and that becauſe Chriſt their head, their glory, their happineſſe, is there, whom they did expect to come one day from thence, not as a terrible Judge, but as a tender-hearted Saviour, ver. 20. And as for their reward, it ſhould not be deſtruction, but ſalvation and glory: their bodies (for the preſent, vile, humble and low, as being obnoxious to death, corruption and a deluge of miſeries, 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43.) ſhould be changed by the Lord Chriſt, ſo that being freed from theſe baſe qualities, and endued with the contrary glorious ones, 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43. they ſhould be made conform to Chriſts glorious body. And leſt any ſhould look on ſuch a change as impoſſible, he leadeth them unto the conſideration of Chriſt's divine power, whereby he will deſtroy death, and the grave, and ſubject all things unto himſelf; and ſo can eaſily work that glorious change in our vile bodies, v. 21. *Doct.* 1 The converſation of thoſe, who would have themſelves propounded as Patrons for imitation by others, ought to be ſuch, as that of the Apoſtle was; who, exciting the Philippians to follow him, giveth this for a reaſon. *Our converſation is in Heaven.* 2. Believers have right to Heaven, as to their City, Faith being the Burgeſſe-Ticket which giveth an intereſt in the Priviledges of it, *Joh.* 3. 36. *We have our converſation in Heaven,* or, We do live as Free-Burgeſſes of that City, ſo will the Original bear. 3. They are therefore to converſe and live as free Denizens of that City, ſo, that though they be mixed with Hypocrites, *Matth.* 13. 30. and carry about earthly bodies, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. ſtanding in need of earthly ſuſtentation, and ſubject alſo to the common calamities of an earthly life, 1 *Cor.* 15. 44. Yet with their heart and affections they are to be aſpiring daily towards Heaven, *Col.* 3. 1. living in all things ſo, as it becometh thoſe who have preſent right unto it, and one day ſhall get full poſſeſſion of it, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. for, ſo lived the Apoſtle; *We*

have

have our converſation in Heaven, or, We do live as Free-Burgeſſes of that City. 4. Jeſus Chriſt in his bodily preſence, is now in Heaven, and not in Earth; for, ſaith he, *from whence wee look for a Saviour*. 5. Jeſus Chriſt at the end of time is to come from Heaven, and judge the world, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. *from whence we look, &c.* 6. This ſecond coming of his, although it be abhor'd, and hated by wicked Atheiſts, *Act.* 24. 25. he being to come unto them as a terrible Judge, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8. yet it is the matter of the Godlie's expectation; a thing hoped for, and much longed after by them: *from whence alſo we look.* 7 The reaſon why his ſecond coming is ſo much looked for by the Godly, is, Becauſe he is to come, not as a ſin-purſuing-Judge unto them, but as a Saviour with perfect ſalvation, and healing under his wings: *We look for a Saviour.* See *Heb.* 9. 28. 8. The conſideration of this, That Chriſt is in Heaven, and to come as a Saviour from thence, hath an Adamantine vertue to draw up the thoughts and affections of the Believer thither: for, this is given as a reaſon why their converſation was in Heaven; *from whence we expect a Saviour*, ſaith he. 9. Our bodies now ſince the fall, (*Gen.* 3. 19.) are vile and baſe, liable to death and corruption, to ſeveral ſores and ſickneſſes; *our vile body.* 10. That vileneſſe and baſeneſſe which is in our mortal bodies, is properly *ours*, as being contracted by our ſin, by which they were brought down from that glory wherein they were created, *Rom.* 5. 12. Thus *our vile body*, or, (as it is in the Original) *bodies of our vileneſſe*: the vileneſſe is more ours, than the bodies are. 11. The bodies of Believers, however they be now vile and baſe, and ſubject to as many miſeries as the bodies of others are; yea, and are liable to the croſſe for Chriſt, *Matth.* 10. 18. which the bodies of the wicked are not, *Gal.* 6. 12. yet Chriſt in the laſt day ſhall work a glorious change in them, a change, not in their ſubſtance and proportion of members; for we ſhall ſtill have an organick body with diſtinct members, *Job*, 19. 27. but delivered from thoſe baſe and low qualities, which

which ſin hath ſubjected them unto; and adorned with the contrary glorious qualities, ſuch as immortality, 1 *Cor.* 15. 42. and ſplendor, 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. impaſſibility, 1 *Cor.* 15. 44. and agility and lightneſſe, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 17. So that neither ſickneſſe pain, hunger, or death ſhall be able to aſſault our glorified bodies, *Matth.* 22. 30. This is the change here ſpoken of: *Who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body.* 12. Though the body of Chriſt now in Heaven be glorious, being adorned with as much glory as a created body can be capable of; yet it is not indued with the eſſential properties of God, ſo as to be omnipotent, or omnipreſent: (as the *Ubiquitaries* do affirm) *for our bodies ſhall be faſhioned like unto his glorious body*: and yet none can rationally aſſert, That they ſhall be adorned with any of the eſſential properties of God. 13. The reſurrection of our bodies, and transforming of them thus gloriouſly after they ſhall be turned unto duſt, and eaten with worms, *Job*, 19. 26. as it is a thing almoſt incredible, and to fleſh and blood wholly impoſſible, *Act.* 17. 32. ſo the conſideration and faith of divine omnipotency, which is engaged to bring it about, will make all doubts of that kind evaniſh, as knowing nothing is impoſſible unto God: ſo *Paul*, that he may confirm them in the faith of this great point, leadeth them to the power of God, *according to his working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.* 14. There is nothing within the reach of divine omnipotency which ſhall be left uneſſayed, rather than the Believers glory, both in ſoul and body, ſhould remain uncompleated: for which he ſaith, *whereby he is able*: it is ſuppoſed, that if it be within the compaſſe of divine ability, it ſhall be done.

CHAP. IV.

IN the firſt part of this chapter, *Paul* exhorteth the Philippians unto ſome chriſtian vertues, to wit, To conſtancy, v. 1. to concord, v. 2, 3. to rejoyce in the Lord, v. 4. to moderation of minde, v. 5. to beware of anxious heart-cutting diffident care, and to give themſelves to prayer and praiſes, v. 6. for ſo they ſhould have much of Gods peace, v. 7. and generally, to every thing which was praiſe-worthy, v. 8. which he inforceth from his own example, and the fruit which ſhould follow hereupon, v. 9.

In the ſecond part, he commendeth them for their benevolence towards him in his ſtrait, excuſing the delay, v. 10. and cleareth himſelf from dejectedneſſe of ſpirit under want, v. 11, 12, 13. and yet ſhoweth their gratuity was acceptable, v. 14. which he amplifieth by mentioning their liberality towards him in former times, v. 15, 16. and purgeth himſelf from an indirect intention to excite them to the beſtowing of more, v. 17. ſhewing what he had already received did abundantly ſatisfie him, v. 18. for which their gratuity, he promiſeth unto them a recompence from God, v. 19.

In the third part he concludeth the Epiſtle, firſt, with a doxology, v. 20. Secondly, with ſome mutual ſalutations, v. 21, 22. And thirdly, with his uſual farewell-wiſh, v. 23.

Verſ. 1. *Therefore, my Brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*

FRom what *Paul* hath ſaid in the former chapter, he inferreth a vehement exhortation, inforced by a number of affectionate compellations, That they would remain conſtant in the doctrine and practice of the Goſpel,

ſo

ſo as they had done hitherto, and as he had preſently preſcribed, chap. 3. *Doct.* 1. So ready are we to weary in well-doing, *Gal.* 5. 7. ſo unwearied is the Tempter in his aſſaulting of us, what by reiterating old tentations, what by preſenting us with new ones, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. That even thoſe, who for a long time have given great proof of their conſtancy both in profeſſion of Truth, and practice of Duties, are not ſo far beyond the reach of backſliding, but they ſtand in need of frequent and vehement exhortations to make them ſtand on their guard againſt it: So *Paul* exhorteth thoſe Philippians to conſtancy, notwithſtanding they had already given large proof of it; *ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord.* 2. The faith of glory, and rich reward which is laid up to thoſe who perſevere unto the end, is a ſtrong motive unto conſtancy and perſeverance: ſo, from what the Apoſtle ſpake in the cloſe of chap. 3. of that glorious change to be wrought upon the bodies of Believers, he inferreth, *So ſtand faſt.* 3. As a peoples profiting by the Miniſtery of the Word, ought to indear them unto a faithful Paſtor; ſo a Miniſter may, without imputation of flattery, make it known unto the people, and that in the moſt pathetick way, how much they are eſteemed of by him; that hereby he may excite them to further progreſſe. And this uſe only ſhould be made by people of the approbation of their faithful diſcerning Paſtors, or of any other whoſe approbation they think worthy to put a price upon: Thus the Apoſtle here gives them a number of affectionate compellations, all of them breathing forth his reſpect and love nnto them, ſuch as *Brethren*, as being profeſſors of the ſame faith; *dearly beloved*, being ſuch as for their piety had much room in his heart; *and longed for*, his abſence from whom was his burden; *my joy*, the remembrance of whom made him ſing under all his ſufferings; and *my crown*, they were as an ornament unto him, his glory and diadem, being gained to Chriſt by his Miniſtery, and having remained conſtant, when others had fallen away.

Verſ. 2. *I beſeech Euodias, and beſeech Syntiche, that they be of the ſame minde in the Lord.*

3. *And I intreat thee alſo, true yoke-fellow, help thoſe women which laboured with me in the Goſpel, with Clement alſo, and with other my fellow-labourers, whoſe names are in the book of life.*

He ſpeaketh to two women, who being of ſome note in that Church, did in ſome things, as appeareth, relating to Religion, differ as well the one from the other, as both of them from the Doctrine publickly profeſſed in that Church; Them he exhorteth, that laying aſide their contention and ſtrife, they would endeavour peace and unity betwixt themſelves, ſuch as God would approve of, ver. 2. And becauſe diviſions of that kinde are not eaſily compoſed, he exhorteth ſome one of his once-fellow-labourers in that Church, to contribute his endeavours for helping them to union, becauſe they had been uſeful to him in their ſtations, while he was preaching the Goſpel, and planting a Church at Philippi, with one *Clement*, and ſome other private Chriſtians; all which in charity he did judge to be truly gracious, and in the number of Gods Elect Children. *Doct.* 1. It is the duty of Paſtors to inſtruct, exhort, rebuke and comfort, not only the whole Church in general, but alſo particular perſons by name, as occaſion offereth, and their neceſſity requireth: ſo doth *Paul, I beſeech* Euodias, *and beſeech* Syntiche. 2. Difference of judgment among profeſſors, in things relating to Religion, is of dangerous conſequence, as being an occaſion of ſtrife and diſcord, of alienation of heart and affections, 2 *Cor.* 12. 20. as cauſing hurtfull diverſions from that which ſhould be our main work, to waſt our precious time, and the edge of our ſpirits upon things leſſe neceſſary, 1 *Tim.* 1. 4. *Paul* looks upon this difference as worthy to be taken notice of, even by an Apoſtle; *I beſeech*, ſaith he. 3. It is very caſual for ſuch differences to fall in among profeſſors, who have been other wiſe pious and uſeful in the Lords work: thus

Euodias,

Euodias and *Syntiche*, who helped *Paul* in the Goſpel, falleth at ods among themſelves: *I beſeech* Euodias, *&c.* 4. Peace and unity in the Church, and among all the members of the Church, is a thing much to be ſtudied for and ſought after: *I beſeech they be of the ſame minde.* 5. But by all means it would be ſeen to, That the compoſing of the Churches differences be an union in the Lord, and ſuch as he will approve of: ſo *he beſeecheth them to be of one minde*, but, *in the Lord.* 6. We ought to make uſe of our familiarity with, and intereſt in others, to ſet them upon imployments honourable unto God, and profitable unto the Church of Chriſt, and the true members thereof, ſo far as their ſtation will permit, and their abilities can reach: ſo *Paul* maketh uſe of his intireneſſe with one above the reſt (whom he calleth his *true-yokefellow*, becauſe, as appears, of their being joyntly imployed in the work of the Miniſtery, as Oxen drawing under one yoke) to ſet him upon the reconciling of thoſe two, who were at diſtance, *and I intreat thee alſo true yoke-fellow.* 7. As Church-diviſions, though eaſily fallen into (*Act.* 15. 37, &c.) are not eaſily cured; ſo it is the duty of all, who have power and parts, to imploy them all for the curing of them, and this eſpecially, when the ſcandalous rent is among ſuch who have been reputed gracious, and have proved ſteadable to the work of God in their ſeveral ſtations: hence he exhorteth to help thoſe women to union, becauſe they had *laboured with him in the Goſpel.* 8. As the Goſpel, when it firſt cometh in power to a place, meeteth with no ſmall oppoſition; ſo it is the duty, not only of Miniſters, but alſo of private Chriſtians, and that of both ſexes, keeping ſtill their own ſtations, 1 *Cor.* 14. 34. to contribute their uttermoſt for making of the Goſpel ſucceſſefull: ſo did they at Philippi, *who laboured with me in the Goſpel, with Clement alſo, and with other my fellow-labourers*; the word rendered *Laboured*, ſignifieth to ſtrive as wreſtlers, who make uſe of all their ſtrength. What their labour was, is not expreſſed, but certainly it was ſuch as became them

in their ſtations. 9. The Lord knoweth who are his with as great certainty, as a man knoweth thoſe of his family, whoſe names he hath written in a book: ſo much is imported by this phraſe, *whoſe names are written in the book of life*; not that God hath, or ſtandeth in need of any ſuch book for the help of his memory; the ſpeech is only metaphorical, bearing this much, That God hath fore-ordained them to life, and ſo knoweth certainly they ſhall be ſaved, as if their names were all inrolled. See 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. 10. Though none can paſſe a certain and infallible judgment upon others, whether they belong to the election of grace, or not, *Rom.* 14. 4. yet there may, and ought to be a judgment of charity paſſed upon all, and every one of ſuch, as elected and choſen, whom we ſee conſtant in the doctrine of Faith, ſtudying to be holy themſelves, and contributing their utmoſt for promoving the work of God among others; for *Paul*, from the judgment of charity, pronounceth of ſuch, *whoſe names are written in the book of life.*

Verſ. 4. *Rejoyce in the Lord alway: and again I ſay, Rejoyce.*

He exhorteth moſt earneſtly that they would not ſuffer themſelves to be drawn off from that neceſſary duty of rejoycing in the Lord, preſſed, chap. 3. v. 1. But that under all conditions, and at all times they would make conſcience of it. *Doct.* 1. It is not only the Lords allowance, but alſo his command unto his people, which they are to obey, under hazard of diſobedience, *to rejoyce in the Lord*, that is, from the conſideration of the excellency of Chriſt in himſelf, *Cant.* 5. 10, &c. and his uſefulneſs unto them, *Pſal.* 118. 1. together with their intereſt in him, *Cant.* 2. 16. and the obſervation of his providence and care towards them, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. to keep their own hearts, not only free from anxiety and diſcouragement, but feeding alſo upon the ſenſe and ſweetneſſe which floweth from all thoſe conſiderations: for, this is the duty

duty of *rejoycing in the Lord*, which he here preſſeth. 2. This is a duty conſtantly to be made conſcience of under all caſes and conditions, whether proſperous or adverſe: there being alwayes grounds of rejoycing to the believer, though not in the world, nor in himſelf, yet in the Lord, and in what the word holdeth forth of him, *Joh.*16.33. if he by his own untender walking, or miſbelieving diſcouragement, do not mar his acceſſe to the right uſe-making of thoſe grounds, *Pſal.*42.11. *Rejoyce alwayes* ſaith he. 3. It is not eaſie to work up the heart to the conſcientious practice of this duty, eſpecially at all times: hence he doubleth the exhortation, thereby pointing out how averſe we are from this duty: *Rejoyce alwayes, and again I ſay rejoyce.*

Verſ. 5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men: The Lord is at hand.*

He further exhorteth them in all their affairs to the exerciſe of moderation, whereby they ſhould rather remit ſomwhat of what was their right according to the rule of ſtrict juſtice, then do any reall hurt unto others, and that becauſe of Gods preſence, to wit, by his providence preſently, and by his ſecond comming to judge the world, before it be long. *Doct.* 1. It is the duty of Chriſtians, not alwayes to exact the rigour of what in ſtrict Law they may claim unto, whether in ſeeking reparation of injuries, *Col.*3.13. and repayment of debts, *Ex.* 22. 25,26. or in uſe-making of recreations, and any of their allowed liberties *Gal.*5.13. but are to remit ſomwhat of their right, as the neceſſity of their neighbour, *Ex.*22.25,26. or his edification calleth for it, *Rom.*14. 21. for this is the moderation here exhorted unto, *let your* moderation *be known.* 2. However Chriſtians are not to hunt after applauſe or vain-glory, by ſetting forth the good things which are in them to the publick view, *Mat.*6.1.6. 18. yet they are not under pretence of eſchewing that evil

or the ſuſpicion of it, to cover all they do from the view of others; but are bound to make their good works manifeſt, that others therein may ſee their duty, and have matter of bleſſing God on their behalf: See *Matth.* 5.16. *Let your moderation be known &c.* 3. The fore-mentioned advantages by making our good works manifeſt, are moſt effectually produced, not ſo much by ſpeaking of the good which we do, as when the work ſpeaketh for it ſelf unto thoſe who do behold it, and chiefly unto ſuch as find benefit by it: thus they were to *make their moderation known unto all men*, to wit, by giving reall proof of it. 4 Although theſe duties flowing from intimate ſociety and near relations, be due onely to ſuch, who ſtand under thoſe relations unto us, 1 *Tim.* 5.8. yet none, whether good or bad, are to be excluded from their juſt intereſt in thoſe duties which are grounded upon common equity, ſuch as are duties of charity, juſtice, mercy and condeſcendence unto humane infirmity: of which ſort is this moderation here ſpoken of: *let your moderation be known to all men.* 5. God is ſtill preſent by his providence for the help of thoſe that fear him, *Pſal.* 145.18. and is haſting unto his ſecond coming, when he ſhall judge the world in righteouſneſſe, *Rev.* 22. 20. *The Lord is at hand.* 6. The conſideration and faith of Gods nearneſſe, as ſaid is, may incourage Chriſtians much to the exerciſe of moderation in all their affairs, as knowing whatever preſent prejudice they may ſuſtain by their chriſtian condeſcendencie in remitting ſomewhat of their own right, rather than to hurt or ſcandalize others, it will be abundantly made up by the providence of God working for them in the mean time, and his compleat righting of all wrongs in the day of his ſecond coming, *Mark* 10.29, 30. for this is the argument, whereby he preſſeth moderation; *The Lord is at hand.*

Verſ. 6. *Be carefull for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thanksgiving, let your requeſts be made known unto God.*

Here

Here is a further exhortation to beware of anxious heart-cutting diffident care, about things worldly, and the ſucceſſe of what we do undertake in our lawful Callings: for curing whereof he preſcribeth this remedie, that in the conſcientious uſe of their Callings, they would have recourſe unto God by prayer, wherein by ſupplicating for good things, by deprecating deſerved wrath, and thankfull acknowledgement of mercies already received they might pour out their hearts in God's boſome, leaving the diſpoſall of all their affairs upon him. *Doct.* 1. However there be a lawfull care about things worldly not prohibited, but frequently commanded, *Rom.* 12. 11. Yet there is a care not lawfull, to wit, when a man exceedeth in care; and ſo, as to care for nothing but the world, *Pſal.* 49. 11. and ſo, as to keep himſelf upon a continuall rack, as fearing want of ſucceſſe in what he doth, *Pſal.* 37. 5. and ſo, as to joyn iſſue with any thing, though never ſo ſinfull, for preſerving or bringing about the thing cared for, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. This exceſſive care is ſinfull, and here forbidden; *be carefull in nothing.* 2. As this exceſſive care doth hinder the exerciſe of moderation, by driving men to the utmoſt of rigour in all their dealings with others, as fearing, leſt by the ſmalleſt condeſcendencie, they undo themſelves: ſo nothing contributeth more to make a man mercifull, gentle, and condeſcending to the neceſſity and good of others, though even to his own ſeeming prejudice than to keep his heart above this anxious, vexing, diffident and heart-cutting care: hence unto the former exhortation of making their *moderation known to all men*, he ſubjoyneth this as an help, *be carefull in nothing.* 3. The beſt remedie againſt this exceſſive diffident care, is, not to run upon the other extream of caſting by all lawful care and diligence, *Matth.* 4. 7. but that in the conſcientious uſe of our lawfull imployments, we make our addreſſe unto God by prayer, deprecating deſerved wrath, asking for deſired ſucceſſe, bleſſing him for favours already received, and ſo to leave the burden of all our care upon

on him: this is it which the Apoſtle preſcribeth; *but in every thing by ſupplication and prayer, &c.* 4. All our Prayers would be ſo compoſed, as that they may be known to God, that is, approved of him, and ſo proceeding from the ſenſe of our want, 1 *Kings* 8. 38. put up in the Name of Chriſt, *John* 16. 23. and for things according to his will, 1 *Joh.* 5. 14. *Let your requeſts be made known unto God.* 5. There are ſeverall ſorts of Prayers ſet forth here, by three diſtinct expreſſions; for the word *requeſts*, is generall to all the kindes: Firſt, there is *Prayer*, whereby we ſeek thoſe things which we want from God, acknowledging how unworthy we are of them. Secondly, there is *ſupplication*, whereby we deprecate evils and judgements, whether felt or feared, acknowledging our ſins, whereby we have deſerved them. Thirdly, there is *thanks-giving*, whereby we bleſſe God for favours already beſtowed; *by prayer, and ſupplication, and thanksgiving.* 6. Bleſſing of God for favours received, is neceſſary to be joyned with prayer and ſupplication, there being conſtant matter of thankſgiving under all conditions, v. 11. and to ſuppreſſe that fretting, quarrelling, and impatient humour, which often venteth it ſelf againſt God in our prayers and ſupplications, where thankſgiving to God for favours received, is not joyned with them, *Pſal.* 77. 7. compared with v. 10, 11. Hence the Apoſtle commandeth, *but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication, with thanksgiving, let your requeſts be known unto God.*

Verſ. 7. *And the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and mindes through Chriſt Jeſus.*

For inforcing the former exhortation, he ſubjoyneth a promiſe, that upon their ſo doing, *the peace of God* (a myſtery ſo deep, that it tranſcendeth the reach of naturall reaſon) ſhould, as with a guard of armed ſouldiers, defend their underſtandings, will and affections, againſt the

the aſſault of any temptation, which might otherwayes drive them to diſcouragement, and vexing diffident cares and fears of ſuffering from men, upon their exerciſe of moderation in all their actions. *Doct.* 1. There is a calmneſſe and tranquility of ſpirit attainable by believers, flowing from their peace made with God in juſtification, and wrought in a believer by the Spirit of God, (hence it is called, *the peace of God*) which goeth beyond the reach of all created underſtanding to comprehend, it being a thing almoſt incredible, that thoſe who are moſt under the laſh of divine rods, ſhould yet have Gods peace; who of all others are moſt toſſed with ſtorms & tempeſts, ſhould yet injoy a ſweet calm in their own mind; who are often deſtitute of all things, ſhould yet be as little anxious, as if they injoyed all things. A Chriſtian is made up thus, of ſo many ſeeming contrarieties, that no wonder the Apoſtle doth ſpeak here of this *peace of God* as *paſſing all underſtanding*. 2. This peace of God cannot be preſerved, but in the due practice of commanded duties, eſpecially in the exerciſe of prayer; for, it's promiſed, if they be diligent in prayer, v. 16. *the peace of God ſhall guard their hearts*. 3. Where this peace is intertained, it doth marvellouſly guard the whole ſoul, wit, will and affections from being overcome by, or diſquieted much with the apprehenſion of loſſes or injuries, whether felt or feared: This peace with God, and with a mans own conſcience in God, is of ſuch excellent worth, that ſo long as it is injoyed, no other loſſe is much valued; for, it's promiſed as a guard againſt the fore-mentioned heart-cutting care; *The peace of God ſhall guard your hearts*. 4. All that is in man, eſpecially his ſoul, and every faculty of it, is as ſo many patent ports to receive moſt dangerous temptations, ſo that there muſt be a guard ſet to defend every one of them, otherwayes the temptation getteth moſt ready paſſage: thus much is imported, while he ſaith, *the peace of God ſhall keep*, or guard *your hearts*, that is, the will and affection; *and mindes*, that is, the underſtanding: It is a Metaphore

taphore taken from Military affairs, where Guards of Souldiers are placed at the Ports of Cities, or weaker parts of the walls, to ſtop the Enemies entry. 5. However preſervation againſt the on-ſets of temptation, be a promiſed fruit of diligence in the uſe of preſcribed means; yet all the efficacie of thoſe means cometh through Jeſus Chriſt and his vertue working with them, who therefore would be eyed above means: hence this ſafety from the temptation, though promiſed upon their diligence in prayer; yet it is *through Jeſus Chriſt.*

Verſ. 8. *Finally, brethren, whatſoever things* are *true, whatſoever things* are *honeſt, whatſoever things* are *juſt, whatſoever things* are *pure, whatſoever things* are *lovely, whatſoever things* are *of good report: if there be any vertue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.*

Becauſe thoſe Chriſtians at Philippi lived among Heathens, in whom there were ſome things worthy of imitation, as many other things were not; therefore the Apoſtle exhorteth them to ſeverall things, relating chiefly to the adorning of Religion, and making of it lovely unto thoſe Heathens; and particularly that they would diligently conſider, and from conſideration, imitate every thing among them, which was *true, honeſt, juſt, pure,* and *of good report:* providing only, that thoſe things *of good report,* were not vices, but reall vertues, and ſo, truly worthy of praiſe. *Doct.* 1. It is the duty of Chriſtians, eſpecially of thoſe who live among haters of Religion, and ſuch as ſeek all occaſions to ſpeak evill of it, to ſet themſelves to ſearch, find out, and, as it were, to caſt their accompt by what means and carriage they may adorn Religion moſt, and make it lovely unto others, and accordingly to carry themſelves in all things: ſo, while he is exhorting thoſe Philippians to adorn Religion by their carriage, he injoyneth them to *think on thoſe things*; the word ſignifieth, to ſearch out a thing diligently, by com-

comparing one with another, as Accompters uſe to do. 2. Chriſtians are not to be ſo ſcrupulous as to reject things true, and in themſelves good, though profeſſed and practiſed by men, who are otherwayes extreamly bad: ſo, he exhorteth them to *think upon*, and imitate every thing which was *true* and *honeſt*, even among the the Heathens. 3. It is the duty of Chriſtians, to diſcern truth from errour, rejecting the latter, and adhering to to the former, *Epheſ.* 4.14,15. to ſpeak nothing but truth in their ordinary communication, *Eph.* 4.25, and to perform what they promiſe, *Pſal.* 15.4. for, they are to *think upon whatever things are true.* 4. It is the duty of Chriſtians ſo to walk, as by the whole ſtrain of their carriage, they may gain reſpect to their perſons and profeſſion from others, all their converſation ſavouring of nothing but gravity, as being far from ſcurrility, lightneſſe and vanity in their apparell, words, deeds, and all their behaviour, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9, 10. for thoſe are things *honeſt*, or *grave*, as it is in the Originall, which he exhorteth them to conſider. 5. Chriſtians ought to conſider, and accordingly to perform what things are *juſt*, that is, whatever we are bound to do unto others, whether to God or man, *Matth.* 22. 21. whether by the Law of Nature, 1 *Tim.* 5.8. or of Nations, *Ruth* 3.13. by reaſon of our place or ſtation, *Neh.* 6.11. whether the things we owe be determined by paction, as ſuch a ſum of money, or ſo much grain, *Col.* 4.1. or onely to be determined according to the rules of prudence, equity, or charity, *Col.* 4. 1. whether it be fear or honour, *Rom.* 13.7. goodwill, *Rom.* 13. 8. or ſomewhat further: ſo as none be defrauded of that which is his own; for thoſe are the things *juſt*, which he willeth them to *think upon.* 6. Chriſtians who would adorn the Goſpel, muſt ſtudy purity and chaſtity in all the parts of their converſation, being far from any thing in their words or actions, which may ſavour of obſcenity, or any bitter root of uncleanneſſe within, *Eph.* 4.29. for thoſe are the *things pure*, or chaſt, which he exhorteth them to *think upon.* 7. However Chriſtians are not to venture

venture on things ſinful, for humouring of thoſe among whom they converſe, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. yet they are bound, in ſo far as with a good conſcience they can, to commend their perſons and profeſſion, even to wicked men, by their lovely, affable, and condeſcending carriage, *Tit.* 3. 2, 3. for, thoſe are the *things lovely*, which he willeth them to minde. 8. Though Chriſtians are not to hunt after the applauſe of men, *Gal.* 1. 10. yet, leſt the Goſpel be evil ſpoken of through them, and they in capacity to ſerve God in their ſtations by doing good unto others, they are to walk ſo as they may be deſervedly ſpoken well of, eſchewing every thing which tendeth to make their names ſtink and unſavory unto others, 1 *Pet.* 2. 12. hence he commandeth them to *minde things that are of good report.* 9. A Chriſtian may not preſently cloſe with every thing which is well reported of, or may gain applauſe unto himſelf among thoſe with whom he liveth, *Luke* 16. 15. But except the thing in it ſelf be the exerciſe of ſome vertue, and truly worthy of praiſe, he is to reject it and abhor it, although it be never ſo much cried up by others; for, he exhorteth them to mind thoſe *things which are of good report*, but with this caution, *if there be any vertue or praiſe in them.*

Verſ. 9. *Thoſe things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and ſeen in me, do: and the God of peace ſhall be with you.*

He preſſeth the former exhortation, 1. from his own example; he had both preached and practiſed thoſe things, as they themſelves were witneſſes. 2. From the fruit following; hereby they ſhould injoy more conſtant communion with God, and more of that inward peace, whereof God is author. *Doct.* 1. It is the duty of Miniſters, who would prove faithful, to be much in preſſing upon their hearers the ſubſtantial duties of Religion, not inſiſting ſo much upon notional caſes, or any other thing relating leſſe to peoples practice, *Tit.* 3. 9. Of the former

mer ſort were thoſe, ſpoken of, ver. 8. which to inculcate by preaching, was one great part of the Apoſtles task, as appeareth from the many expreſſions here uſed: *Thoſe things which ye have both learned, received, and heard.* 2. It is the duty of Miniſters, not only to preſſe duties by preaching, but to practiſe what they ſo preſſe by a holy life, whereby people may ſee that in them, which they hear from them, ſee 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. So did *Paul*, *Ye have both learned and ſeen in me.* 3. A people are the more bound, and ſhould be the more ſtirred up to go about commanded duties, that they are under a Miniſter, whoſe doctrine is lively and his life exemplary: for, *Paul* maketh his practice an argument to excite them to their duty; *Thoſe things which ye have both learned, and ſeen in me.* 4. A Chriſtian keeping himſelf in the exerciſe of good works, and practice of commanded duties, may expect much of Gods gracious preſence, and of that tranquility and peace of minde, whereof God is the author, under the ſtrongeſt toſſings of turbulent times: for he inforceth this exhortation, *Thoſe things do*, from this promiſe, *the God of peace ſhall be with you.*

Verſ. 10. *But I rejoyced in the Lord greatly, that now at the laſt your care of me hath flouriſhed again, wherein ye were alſo careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

In the ſecond part of the chapter, the Apoſtle ſheweth how much he rejoyced at, and was affected with their benevolence ſent unto him, after ſo long delay of time; excuſing alſo the delay, as imputing it to the calamity of the times, which deprived them of an opportunity, and not to want of good-will in them, which he did never queſtion. *Doct.* 1. As it is the lot of moſt eminent Chriſtians ſomtimes to ſtand in need of help and ſupply from others: ſo it is their duty thankfully to acknowledge thoſe whom God hath made helpful unto them in their ſtrait: ſo doth the Apoſtle here, *But I rejoyced in the Lord greatly, &c.* 2. A ſpiritual heart and wiſe obſerver

of

of providence, will find matter of much joy in God, and of praiſe unto him, even in thoſe things which to an ordinary eye would not ſeem to be of ſo much worth: ſo *Paul* looketh upon this gratuity as a matter of rejoycing in the Lord greatly, becauſe he ſaw much more in it than the thing it ſelf, to wit, A reviving of the root of grace in theſe fruits of charity, which before appeared as withered and gone; *I rejoyced in the Lord greatly*, ſaith he, *that your care of me hath flouriſhed.* 3. Though there may be in thoſe who are truly gracious, a ſad ceſſation from the exerciſe of grace, ſometimes through want of opportunity, as here, and ſometimes alſo through their falling into ſeveral ſins, 2 *Sam.* 11. 4. yet the ſeed of God remaineth in them, there is life and ſap at the root, which through Gods bleſſing in due time will bud up and bring forth the former fruit; *now at laſt your care of me hath flouriſhed*; the word is borrowed from trees, which ſeem in Winter to be dead and withered, and in the Spring revive again. 4. How long ſoever a mercy be delayed, and poſtponed, a godly heart will ſee in it matter of thankſgiving both to God, and alſo to thoſe from whom as inſtruments, the mercy is conveyed: ſo did *Paul*, *I rejoyced, that now at laſt your care of me hath flouriſhed.* 5. It were the wiſdom of Gods people to watch for the opportunity of doing good, and make uſe of it; ſeeing even thoſe who would do good may ere long be deprived of opportunity to do it: *ye were careful, but ye lacked opportunity.* 6. The want of an opportunity, not through our default, doth excuſe and juſtifie the forbearance, for a time, of a poſitive duty, if ſo good-will be preſent, ſee 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. from this, *Paul* excuſeth them, *ye wanted opportunity*, ſaith he. 7. It is the part of chriſtian charity to excuſe, ſo far as prudence will permit, that which may ſeem to be the neglect of others, expounding things doubtſome favourably, and imputing their omiſſions to the want, not of good-will, but of opportunity: ſo doth *Paul*, *wherein ye were careful, but ye wanted opportunity.*

Verſ.

Verſ. 11. *Not that I ſpeak in reſpect of want: for I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

12. *I know both how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things I am inſtructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need.*

13. *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.*

Leſt they had miſtaken the Apoſtle, as if his ſo much joy for their gratuity had argued him to have been of a dejected ſpirit through reaſon of want; he clears himſelf, denying his joy to have proceeded from any thing of that kind, and that becauſe he was gifted from God with full contentment under every condition, ver. 11. and ſo he reckoneth ſeveral particular conditions, under which he had learned to live contentedly at all times, and in all places: As firſt, under diſgrace, and abundance of worldly applauſe. Secondly, ſtore of meat and drink, and utter ſcarcity and want. Thirdly, under his abounding generally in all things neceſſary for food, raiment, lawfull pleaſures and recreations, and a ſparing meaſure of all thoſe things, ver. 12. And leſt, by what is ſaid, he might be looked upon as a vain arrogant boaſter, he pointeth at the fountain from whence he was furniſhed, to wit, The power aud vertue of Jeſus Chriſt inabling him, ver. 13. *Doct.* 1. A ſeeker of God, eſpcially a Chriſtian Miniſter, would be careful, leſt he do or ſay any thing whereby he may incur the ſuſpicion of being too much deſirous of things worldly, or of being too much dejected and caſt down through the want of them: there being nothing which maketh the Goſpel to be worſe ſpoken of, than the ſin of Covetouſneſſe in the Preachers, or Profeſſors of it: hence *Paul* doth ſo carefully clear his former words from ſavouring of any thing of that kind; *not that I ſpeak in reſpect of want*, ſaith he.

2. The Child of God is ſubject to change of conditions in things outward, being ſometimes in credit, ſometimes in diſgrace; ſometimes rich, ſometimes poor; ſometimes ſick, ſometimes in health; ſometimes injoying all things neceſſary for his ſuſtentation and life, ſometimes almoſt wholly deprived of them: ſo was it with *Paul*, *I know how to be abaſed, and how to abound, &c.* 3. Whatever be the ſeveral changes, wherewith the Lord doth exerciſe his own, they are to be contented under them, to wit, ſo as not to grudge and repine againſt God, *Job*, 2. 9, 10. or to give way unto heartleſſe dejection of ſpirit under adverſity, *Pro.* 24. 10. though they may uſe lawful means for delivering themſelves from it, 1 *Sam.* 30. 9. and ſo, as not to be puffed up by proſperity, *Job* 31. 25. nor forget the Lord, *Prov.* 30. 9. and deſpiſe others who want, *Job*, 31. 13. Thus *Paul learned in every ſtate therewith to be content; he knew how to abound, &c.* 4. This great Leſſon of Contentment under every eſtate, is a thing whereof all by nature are ignorant, none have skill in it except they learn it: *Paul* did learn it, *I have learned.* 5. The knowledge of this Leſſon is attained, not ſo much by reading Books, and inſixing in our memories directions to that purpoſe; as by frequent change of condition, and the Lords bleſſing of our changes for begetting in us experimental knowledge, how to carry our ſelves in each condition: thus *Paul* did learn this Leſſon, *I have learned and am inſtructed*; The latter word ſignifieth, to be initiated in holy things, or religiouſly taught: ſo there is a piece of divine skill neceſſary for teaching folk this leſſon. 6. The tentations which attend a proſperous condition are ſo many, ſuch as pride, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. diſdain of others, *Jam.* 2. 6. and ſecurity, *Luke* 12. 19. The duties which are required in it, are ſo many, ſuch as thankfulneſſe to God, 1 *Chron.* 24. 10. beneficence to all men, 1 *Tim.* 6 18. humility and ſobriety of ſpirit in the managing of it, *Jer.* 9 23. and laying our account to meet with changes, *Job*, 3. 25. and the many diſtractions which do accompany it, and tend to the hindering of

those

thoſe duties, are ſo ſubtil and inſinuating, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. that there is no leſſe need of divine art for carrying of our ſelves aright under proſperity, than there is for ſuch a chriſtian carriage under adverſity: ſo *Paul* muſt be *inſtructed, how to be full, and how to abound*, as well as how to be *hungry, and how to ſuffer want.* 7. Man's naturall faculties are renewed, but not deſtroyed by grace, or laid aſleep, as if Chriſt himſelf did all things, and we nothing: for *Paul* ſaith here, that *he did*; the action did flow from an inward principle of a renewed will and underſtanding, *I am able to do.* 8 The power by which renewed ſouls do work, is wholly Chriſts; not only the habits of grace are from him, but alſo the actuating of thoſe habits doth flow from his ſpecial influence: *through him that ſtrengtheneth me.* 9. There is a kind of omnipotency in a Believer, being ſupported by Chriſt's ſtrengthning power; ſo that there is nothing within the compaſſe of his chriſtian calling, and for which there is a Covenant-promiſe for through-bearing, there is no ſuch thing unpoſſible for him to do: *I am able to do all things.* 10. This note of univerſality, *All*, whether applied to perſons, or things, is not to be taken every where in its larger ſenſe, but to be aſtricted to the clear meaning of the place where it is, and the exigency of other Scriptures: ſo *Paul* ſaith, *I am able to do all things*, which cannot be extended to all and every thing without limitation (there being many things ſimply impoſſible to be done by any creature) but muſt be reſtricted to all thoſe things which conſiſt in the exerciſe of chriſtian moderation under all diſpenſations, or at moſt, to all things within the compaſſe of his chriſtian calling, and for which there is a covenant-promiſe for through-bearing: ſee 1 *Cor.* 6. 12. and chap. 9. 22. by which rule, that paſſage, 1 *Tim.* 2. 6. is to be expounded.

Verſ. 14. *Notwithſtanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.*

Having guarded upon the one hand againſt their ſuſpecting of him to have been too much dejected through want, he guardeth againſt another miſtake, as if their gratuity had been little acceptable unto him; by ſhewing they had done well in doing what they had done, and ſharing with him in his ſufferings for Chriſt. *Doct.* 1. There is nothing which men can do, wherein they are not liable to miſtakes: for, even while they are clearing themſelves of one miſtake, they are in hazard thereby to run under another, as Paul was here. 2. The danger of being miſtaken, ſhould hinder no man from going on in his duty, he is to do what he can to take off miſtakes, and in the mean time be going on in what is right: ſo Paul, having cleared himſelf, proceedeth in his duty, commending thoſe Philippians for their charity; and thereby wipeth off another miſtake, which might have riſen upon his guarding againſt the former; *Nevertheleſs, ye have done well.* 3. Though the Children of God be ſupported with courage from himſelf, to be content with, and to undergo their preſent lot; yet this muſt not make others neglect to help them in their ſtrait, becauſe in ſo doing they do but what is their duty: neither ſhould it make themſelves neglect the offer of ſupply from others, or vilipend it when it's received; this were to tempt God, by neglecting means of help, becauſe of Gods goodneſſe in ſupporting under want of means, when they could not be had. Thus, though Paul was enabled through Chriſt to be content with his hard lot; yet the Philippians give him help, and are therein approven and highly commended by him; *Nevertheleſs*, ſaith he, *ye have done well.* 4. It is the duty of all to prove comfortable unto thoſe who are ſuffering for truth, by ſupplying of their neceſſities according to their power: they did *well in communicating with* Paul's *affliction.* 5. They who make

make conſcience of this duty, do hereby ſhare in the afflictions of thoſe who ſuffer for truth, as if they were ſuffering the ſame things, and for the ſame cauſe with them: ſo the Apoſtle affirms, becauſe of their gratuitie, *they had communicated with his afflictions.*

Verſ. 15. *Now ye Philippians know alſo that in the beginning of the Goſpel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye onely.*

16. *For even in Theſſalonica ye ſent once and again unto my neceſſity.*

The Apoſtle ſheweth himſelf mindfull, not onely of the preſent favour, but alſo of their by-paſt liberalitie towards him, ever ſince he began to preach the Goſpel among them; and this not onely when he was labouring among themſelves, but alſo when he was at Theſſalonica; and withall doth guard againſt their ſuſpecting of him, as too greedie in receiving ſo frequently from them, by ſhewing he had received nothing as a reward for his work from any other Church in thoſe parts; for the truth whereof, he appealeth to their own knowledge. *Doct.* 1. There is a rule of equity to be kept betwixt Paſtour and People, that, as he beſtoweth upon them ſpirituall things by preaching of the Goſpel, ſo they ſhould furniſh him with things carnall, by giving an honourable maintenance, 1 *Cor.* 9. 11. and this a faithfull Miniſter may expect and crave, not as a meer gratuity, but as due debt, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. this is imported in the phraſe here uſed by *Paul*, when ſpeaking of maintenance which was beſtowed on him by thoſe he laboured amongſt in the work of the Goſpel, he uſeth the expreſſion of *giving* and *receiving*, which is uſed by Merchants, who in their Books of Accompts, do mark what they give out, and what they receive in, as the due price of their ware. 2. Though maintenance be moſt due for Miniſters; yet ſuch is the peeviſhneſſe and greed

of many, that hardly can they be driven to quit any thing for up-holding of the Goſpell, though even an Apoſtle *Paul* were preaching among them: this *Paul* did find, *no Church did communicate with me, as concerning giving.* Though it may be alſo, the Apoſtle did forbear to receive any thing from others, were they never ſo willing, for the reaſons mentioned, 1 *Cor.* 9. 15,16,18,19. 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 8,9. 3. A faithfull ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, who is taken up with a deſire after the gaining of ſouls, will digeſt many unkindneſſes of that ſort, paſſing them over as he beſt may, eſpecially ſo long as the Lord provideth for him otherwayes, as he uſually doth, making ſome to ſhew the more of kindneſſe, that others ſhew but little: ſo doth *Paul* meekly paſſe over his not receiving from thoſe other Churches, mentioning with thankfulneſſe the help which he received from Philippi: *no Church communicated with me, but ye only.* 4. This ſpeaketh much to the commendation of a People, when the generall neglect of duty by others, doth not onely not make them neglect their duty, but alſo exciteth them to be more forward in it: for, from this are the Philippians commended; *no Church did communicate with me, but ye only*; and *ye ſent once and again*; they did not look ſo much unto that which others did, as what they themſelves were bound to do. 5. As the Lord may ſuffer his choiceſt ſervants to be driven to worldly ſtraits through want of things neceſſary; ſo, uſually he makes providence to tryſt with their neceſſity, and anſwereth it by thoſe who are leaſt obliged, when others who are more bound, doth take no notice of it, or, they cannot conveniently make uſe of their help: ſo, even in *Theſſalonica, ye ſent once and again to my neceſſity*; when the Theſſalonians, to whom he was preaching, neglected him; or, he could not receive from them, the Philippians ſent him ſupply.

Verſ. 17. *Not becauſe I deſire a gift: but I deſire fruit that may abound to your accompt.*

He

He doth yet guard againſt their ſuſpecting him of greed. ſhewing that his praiſing of their liberality, and charging of others with ingratitude, was not, that thereby he might incite them to give him more, but that they might be incouraged to grow more and more, as in all grace, ſo in this of liberality, whether towards him or others: the advantage thereof ſhould accreſſe to themſelves, more than to any other. *Doct.* 1. One action in it ſelf good and lawfull, may be reckoned unto the worker, either as ſin, or duty, according to the end which he propoſeth to himſelf in it: ſo *Paul's* commending of their liberality, was in it ſelf good, but if his end propoſed, had been onely, or mainly, that thereby he might excite them to give him more, his action had been baſe and ſinfull; and therefore he purgeth himſelf of it, *not that I deſire a gift*: but his intent being mainly to promove their ſalvation by ſtirring them up to their duty, his action is commendable; and therefore he owneth this as the thing intended by him, *but I deſire fruit that may abound to your account.* 2. As Miniſters ought in prudence to ſpeak to the juſt commendation of any good, which they obſerve in people, v. 14. So, a pious heart will not be thereby puffed up, or rendered ſecure, as if he had done enough; but rather excited to make further progreſſe: *I deſire fruit that may abound.* 3. The more a man doth abound in good works, and eſpecially in the works of charity towards ſuch as are in miſery, the greater ſhall be his reward in Heaven, though not of merit, yet of grace, *Rom.* 6. v. 23. for, their fruit of charity *ſhould abound to their account.* It is a Metaphore taken alſo from the Books of Merchants: our good deeds are marked as in a Compt-book by God, and he will give out accordingly.

Verſ. 18. *But I have all, and abound, I am full, having received of Epaphroditus, the things* which were ſent *from you, an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well pleaſing to God.*

That he may remove all ſuſpicions of that kind, and praiſe their liberality yet further, he ſheweth, that their gratuity carried by *Epaphroditus*, was received of him, and did aboundantly ſatisfie, as being ſufficient, yea, more than ſufficient for the preſent ſtrait, and that hereby they had done as acceptable ſervice unto God, as thoſe who under the Law did offer up a ſacrifice perfumed with ſweeteſt incenſe. *Doct.* 1. Though a man be never ſo truſt-worthy in himſelf, and never ſo much truſted by thoſe who do imploy him; yet he ought in wiſedome to guard againſt any ſiniſtrous ſuſpicion which may be taken up againſt his honeſtie and faithfulneſſe: ſo *Epaphroditus*, though their Miniſter, and doubtleſſe in great reputation among them, as a man who would have been loath to convert any of their publick charity to his own private uſe; yet returneth not untill *Paul* give it under his hand, that he had received the whole ſum from him, *I have all*, or, *I have received all*, as it is in the Originall: he knew not but times and peoples eſteem of him might change, and he might be brought to an accompt, or at leaſt ſome might vent their own ſuſpicions of him privatly, to under-myne him. 2. Where there is frugality to manage, and the grace of contentation with what the Lord is pleaſed to beſtow, a little portion of things worldly, will be thought ſufficient: ſo, though a covetous man, and prodigall ſpendthrift, doth never think he hath enough; yet *Paul* doth think it; *I abound, and am full, having received the things which ye ſent.* 3. However there are no expiatory ſacrifices for ſin to be offered up by Chriſtians, Chriſt having offered up himſelf once for all, *Heb.* 9. 28. and though the outward rite of ſacrifizing in any kind be now aboliſhed, all thoſe rudiments ceaſing with the non-age of the Church which was under the Old Teſtament, *Act.* 15. 10. yet the ſubſtance of the Euchariſtick ſacrifice uſed among the Jews, or the thing which was pointed out by that ſacrifice, doth yet remain as a morall dutie, never to be laid aſide, to wit, an evidencing of our thank-

thankfulneſſe to God for favours received, which is done in part, by giving a part of what he hath beſtowed for the help of others who are in a ſtrait; for *Paul* in this ſenſe calleth their charity *an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice.* 4. Seeing our charity and beneficence unto thoſe who are in ſtraits, is a part of our chriſtian ſacrifice: Then, firſt, it muſt be willingly beſtowed, and not through conſtraint, 2 *Cor.* 9.7. Secondly, It muſt be offered unto God in obedience to a command, and to evidence our thankfulneſſe unto him, and not to the creature, not to the Idol of our credit and eſtimation, or for other ſelfiſh ends, *Matth.* 6. 2. Thirdly, It muſt be offered on the right altar, to wit, Chriſt, (ſee *Heb.* 13.10) that through his worth the offering may be accepted by God; for, all thoſe were requiſite unto orderly and acceptable ſacrificing: ſee *Lev.* 22. 19. *Exod.* 22. 20. and 20. 24. *Doct.* 5. Though there be no ſuch meaſure of obedience attainable here, with which the Lord will be ſo well pleaſed, as to judge the performer to be perfect, or adjudge him to eternal life for the worth that is in it, *Rom.* 3. 20. Chriſt's obedience and ſacrifice only being acceptable, and thus well-pleaſing unto him, *Rom.* 5.19. yet he may be ſo pleaſed with his obedience, as to judge him ſincere in what he doth, and to look on his performance, as his own gracious work in him; and that is, when the thing performed is in it ſelf good, *Pſal.* 89. 30, 31, 32. done by a man in Chriſt, *Joh.* 15. 4. by ſtrength drawn from Chriſt, *Joh.* 15. 5. and for the right end, Gods glory, and not worldly applauſe, *Matth.* 6. 5. In this reſpect he calleth their beneficence, *An odour of a ſweet ſmell, acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God.*

Verſ. 19. *But my God ſhall ſupply all your need according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.*

For their further encouragement, he promiſeth unto them from Scripture-grounds (ſee *Pſal.* 41. 1.) that God ſhould recompence them for what they had given, and that

that abundantly, even in this life according to their neceſſity, not for any worth or dignity in their work, but of his own free-grace through Chriſt. *Doct.* 1. Scripture promiſes made of old, are ſtill in force, and in all after-times appliable unto any indued with thoſe qualifications which they had unto whom thoſe promiſes were firſt made: ſo *Paul* applieth that promiſe (*Pſal.* 41.) made unto thoſe who were charitable in *David's* time, unto thoſe Philippians; *but my God ſhall ſupply all your need.* 2. That general promiſes may be the more ſafely and with the greater comfort applied to our own, or the particular caſe of others, we would ſearch into ſuch grounds as may be moſt promiſing for faith to reſt upon in expectation of the thing promiſed: ſo the Apoſtle, to help their faith to cloſe with this promiſe, layeth down two grounds: 1. Gods ſufficiency in theſe words, *according to his riches*; he hath whereupon to do it. 2. His engagement upon his credit and honour in thoſe words, *my God*, as if he had ſaid, He is the God whoſe Ambaſſador I am, and ſo cannot in honour but recompence you for what ye have given to me in my ſtrait. *Doct.* 3. Thoſe who enjoy moſt of the world, cannot promiſe unto themſelves, but they may be driven to ſtraits: for, he ſuppoſeth even they might be redacted to ſtraits, while he ſaith, *my God ſhall ſupply all your need.* 4. The more beneficial any have been unto the poor ſervants of Chriſt in the time of their abundance, they may expect the more that God will be forth-coming unto them by his providence in the day of want: *my God ſhall ſupply all your need.* 5. The Lord in dealing with his people, doth not look ſo much at their worth and deſerving, as what is fitting for his own glory, and moſt beſeeming for ſuch a glorious God to do: *ſo he ſhall ſupply your need in glory*, that is, liberality, as the magnificence of ſuch a glorious King doth call for. 6. Whatever recompence the Lord is pleaſed to give unto the good works, or alms-deeds of his Children, whether here or hereafter, it proceedeth not from the merit, or dignity of the work, but from the merits of Jeſus Chriſt,

Chriſt, in whom they are as members in the head: Chriſt hath purchaſed all; and good works are only the rule according to which his purchaſe is diſtributed: *ſo he ſhall ſupply all your need by*, or, *in Jeſus Chriſt*.

Verſ. 20. *Now unto God and our Father* be *glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Apoſtle, in the third part of the chapter, concluding the Epiſtle firſt, in contemplation of all the former mercies, aſcribeth laſting praiſe and glory to God, as God, and as the Father of Believers, through vertue of that gracious Covenant made between him and them in Chriſt. *Doct.* 1. Though we can wiſh no real worth and excellency to be ſuperadded unto that which God hath: for, he wanteth nothing, *Neh.* 9. 5. Yet it is the duty of Chriſtians to be much in wiſhing, that thoſe excellencies which are in God, may be more and more ſhining forth, *Iſa.* 64. 2. and that the hearts of men and Angels may highly eſteem of him becauſe of them, *Pſal.* 107. 8. for, this is the glory which the Apoſtle wiſheth unto God, and by his practice teacheth others to do the like; *Now unto God be glory.* 2. That Chriſtians may be much and real in this wiſh, they would ſeriouſly conſider that worth, excellency, and goodneſſe of God manifeſted to themſelves in his works, particularly in his works of creation and general providence, in relation to which he is here called GOD; but moſt eſpecially in the works of Redemption and Salvation purchaſed for, and actually beſtowed upon loſt ſinners: in relation to which he is here called *Our Father*; that ſo our own hearts being once affected and filled, even to overflowing, we may with greater fervency and ſincerity break out with this wiſh, That the ſame excellency, and more of it may be manifeſted unto, and conſtantly acknowledged both by our ſelves and others: So the Apoſtle, having conſidered his many favours ſpoken of through the whole Epiſtle, and looking on him as God and our Father, breaketh out

in

in this wiſh, *Now unto God, and our Father be glory.* 3. The fervent deſire of real Saints to have the excellency, worth and goodneſſe of God manifeſted, and accordingly acknowledged, are in a manner boundleſſe, as being circumſcribed by no time or place: there is no leſſe than boundleſs everlaſting glory comprehended in their wiſh; *glory for ever and ever*: wherby is uſually expreſſed eternity and endleſſe duration, ſee *Pſal.* 10. 16. *Rev.* 22. 5.

Verſ. 21. *Salute every Saint in Chriſt Jeſus: the Brethren which are with me greet you.*

22. *All the Saints ſalute you, chiefly they that are of Ceſar's houſhold.*

Secondly, In the concluſion, there are mutual ſalutations and commendations: ſome were to be ſaluted by them in his name, others who were with him did ſalute, or remember themſelves unto them, of whom he reckoneth three ranks. Firſt, Thoſe who were in Church-office, called *Brethren*, ver. 21. Secondly, The private Chriſtians, or Church-members, which were at Rome. And thirdly, More eſpecially he deſigneth Ceſars houſhold, to wit, ſome of his Servants and Courtiers, who were Converts. *Doct.* 1. External duties of civility tending of their own nature to entertain and increaſe love among men, are not to be neglected by Chriſtians; of which ſort are civil ſalutations: Though civility and good manners be not Religion; yet Religion deſtroyeth them not, but injoyneth them: So *Paul*, and thoſe primitive Chriſtians, did mutually ſalute each other; *Salute everie Saint.* 2. Whatever a man be in his inward condition before God, or in his outward condition worldly, whether rich or poor, noble or ignoble; yet, ſo long as he ſtandeth a Church-member, a Miniſter ſhould put that reſpect upon him, and do thoſe duties to him which are due unto one in ſuch a relation; for, he injoyneth them, in his name, *to ſalute everie Saint*, that is, all the Church-members, who are Saints all of them by external,

nal, or federal ſanctity, or holineſſe: according to which, in regard of the Covenant made betwixt God and the viſible Church, every one profeſſing ſubjection unto that Covenant are ſeparated from other people, and in a particular manner dedicated unto Gods ſervice, *Exod.* 31. 13. Now that *Saints* are taken in this latitude here, is very probable: for, if the command had been to ſalute only thoſe, who are Saints by inherent holineſſe, how could it have been obeyed? for, real ſaving grace cannot be known infallibly by another, and ſo inevitably they ſhould have ſaluted many Hypocrites in place of Saints, paſſing by others who were Saints indeed. It may indeed bear thus much, That if any had more real evidence of grace than others, the Apoſtle would have himſelf more ſpecially remembred unto ſuch; but this is not all, for he will have them ſaluting every Saint, and ſo thoſe who were well known unto them to be ſuch: Neither doth the words following, *in Chriſt Jeſus*, militate againſt this ſenſe; for, even thoſe, who are externally and federally Saints, are in Chriſt by an external and viſible union, conſiſting in the ſerious profeſſion of thoſe Truths which relate to him; the effect of which union, is, the communication of common gifts of the Spirit to every one according to their meaſure: ſee *Joh.* 15. 2. *Everie branch in me which beareth no fruit*, which ſuppoſeth ſome to be in Chriſt in the way mentioned, who yet are fruitleſſe branches, and ſo unregenerate. 3. Chriſtian charity will ſo far cover the infirmities and failings of others; as not to diſown them as Brethren, nor yet neglect thoſe chriſtian duties which we owe unto them, or are obliged to do for them as Brethren; for, although (ch. 2. v. 20, 21) he complains of all who were with him, except *Timotheus* only, that *no man was like-minded*, and all *did ſeek their own things*; yet nevertheleſſe, he doth in their name ſalute the Philippians, calling them *Brethren*: *the Brethren which are with me greet you.* 4. So powerful is the Goſpel being accompanied with Gods bleſſing, *Rom.* 1. 16. that it will ſet upon and enter the Houſes of greateſt Perſecutors,

ſecutors, and carry ſome of their chiefeſt Minions captive from their very elbow: ſome even of bloody *Nero's* houſe are converted by the Goſpel: *thoſe of Ceſars houſhold.* 5. Such is the courage and valour of ſpirit with which the Lord doth endue ſincere profeſſors of the Goſpel, that they will dare to hold up a Banner for Truth, even under the noſe, and within the gates of moſt bloodthirſty raging Perſecutors; for, ſome of *Nero's* Houſe upon all hazard perform thoſe duties which their chriſtian calling tied them unto: *chiefly they that are of Ceſar's houſhold* do greet you.

Verſ. 23. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* be *with you all. Amen.*

Thirdly, He concludeth with his uſual farewel-wiſh, to which he affixeth his *Amen.* *Doct.* 1. Gods grace is the ſum of all which a man needeth to wiſh either for himſelf or others; for his *grace* is, firſt, Gods favour, as the fountain of all which is good, *Eph.* 2. 8, 9. And, ſecondly, the ſtreams of grace inherent, and increaſe in it, flowing from that fountain, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. And what want is there where thoſe are? So *Paul* ſummeth up all his deſires in this one, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you.* 2. Gods grace and favour, which reconciled ſouls do injoy, together with the whole bulk of graces inherent, which flow from it, are all purchaſed unto us by Chriſts merit, and applied by his interceſſion; and therefore is juſtly called *the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 3. Our prayers and wiſhes unto God ſhould proceed from ſuch deliberation of mind, *Matth.* 20. 22. ſuch earneſtneſſe of heart and affection, *Jam.* 5. 16. and ſuch confidence of an anſwer according to the tenour of the promiſe, *Jam.* 1. 6. that we may underſtandingly and ſincerely affix our *Amen* unto them; So doth the Apoſtle, *Grace be with you all. Amen.*

A BRIEF

A BRIEF EXPOSITION

Of the Epistle of PAUL the Apostle to the COLOSSIANS.

The ARGUMENT.

EPaphras, *having founded a Church at Colosse, (chap. 1. v. 7.) a city of Phrygia in the lesser Asia, neer to Laodicea and Hierapolis, chap. 4. v. 13. and perceiving the truth of the Gospel preached by him, to be impugned; partly, by some converted from Judaisme, who urged the Ceremonies of the Law, as necessary to salvation, chap. 2. v. 8--- partly, by some converted from Gentilisme, who, from principles of abused Philosophie, did urge the worshipping of Angels, and other superstitious rites, grounded only upon humane tradition, chap. 2. v--8. 18. He informeth* Paul, *now prisoner at Rome (chap. 4. v. 3.) of the case of this Church: whereupon* Paul *writeth this Epistle unto them. His scope wherein, is, (often prefacing, to v. 12. chap. 1.) to confirm that doctrine which was preached unto them by* Epaphras, *to the end of ch. 1. and to guard them against all the fore-named errours, contrary to that doctrine, chap. 2. and to incite them to the study and practice of holiness, both in the generall and speciall duties of Christianity, chap. 3. and to v. 7. of chap. 4. After which he insisteth upon some particular affairs, such as recommendations, salutations, and some directions, to the end of chap. 4.*

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

IN the firſt part of this Chapter (after the inſcription, v. 1, 2.) he inſinuateth himſelf upon their affections, and maketh way for his main purpoſe: Firſt, by ſhewing he did give thanks to God for them, v. 3. being moved thereto by the report of their ſpirituall graces, v. 4, 5. Secondly, by commending them for their fruitfulneſſe, v. 6. and their Paſtour *Epaphras* unto them, v. 7, 8. Thirdly, by ſhewing he prayed alſo to God for them: 1. for increaſe of knowledge, v. 9. 2. for growth in holineſſe, v. 10. and 3. for courage under ſufferings, v. 11.

In the ſecond part, he giveth a brief ſum of ſaving doctrine; wherein he declareth, how God doth fit the Elect for Heaven, v. 12. by calling them effectually, v. 13. and pardoning their ſin, v. 14. Next, he deſcribeth Jeſus Chriſt the Redeemer of the Elect, from his internall relation to God, as being his Image, v. 15.--- his externall relation unto all things created, as being before them, v.---15. their Creator, laſt end v. 16. and their upholder, v. 17. and from his relation to the Church, as being her Head, &c. v. 18. and from his furniture to the Office of Mediatour, v. 19. eſpecially to reconcile man with God, v. 20. which generall doctrine of reconciliation, he applyeth unto the Coloſſians, v. 21, 22.

In the third part, he exhorteth them to continue in this doctrine, confirming the ſame; Firſt, from the authority of his Office, v. 23. which, together with the doctrine preached by him, was confirmed by his ſufferings, v. 24. and from his call to the Office, v. 25. Secondly, from the worth of the doctrine in it ſelf, v. 26, 27. and thirdly, becauſe it was the ſame doctrine which he himſelf preached, v. 28. with great pains, and much divine aſſiſtance, v. 29.

Verſ.

Vers. 1. *Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and Timotheus* our *brother,*

2. *To the saints and faithfull bretheren in Christ, which are at Colosse, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

IN these two verses, is, the inscription of the Epistle, containing, first, a description of those who sent it, from their names and adjuncts, v. 1. Secondly, of those to whom it was directed; from the place of their habitation, and three excellent Epithets. Thirdly, the Apostle's usuall salutation, v. 2.

From the persons who sent the Epistle; *Learn* 1. How free and powerfull must divine grace be, which of a persecuting *Saul* (*Acts* 8. v. 3.) did make an *Apostle Paul.* 2. In the first beginning of the Christian Church, there were a certain kinde of Office-bearers, named *Apostles,* who were called immediatly by God, *Joh.* 20. 21. had infallible knowledge of the doctrine of the Gospel, by immediate inspiration from the Spirit of God, *Joh.* 16. 13. were not tyed unto any certain charge, further than rules of prudence did direct, *Matth.* 28. 19, were gifted with power to work miracles for confirmation of their doctrine, *Mark* 3. 15. the glad tidings of grace being then but new, *Joh.* 1. 17. And did occasionally exerce the duties of all the Office-bearers of the Church, *Acts* 4. 35. Of which Apostles, *Paul* was one: *Paul an Apostle.* 3. Jesus Christ the Mediatour, is intrusted with the work of sending out Ministers to his Church; for, he is the Churches Head, *Eph.* 5. 23. unto whom it belongeth to provide all things necessary for the body: hence *Paul is the Apostle of Jesus Christ,* as being sent by him. 4. The Father's will and Christ's, do fully agree in that which tendeth to the Churches good, as here, in sending forth an Apostle, *Paul* is *an Apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God.* 5. None ought to intrude himself upon any Office, much lesse upon an Office in the Church, without

an orderly call: *Paul is an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God.* 6. It concerneth a Miniſter to be ſo clear in the matter of his Call, that he may be able to avow it unto others, eſpecially when his Calling is queſtioned, *Am.* 7. 14, &c. when he hath to do with thoſe that know him not, as here, chap 2. v. 1: and when he meeteth with contempt and other diſcouragements in the diſcharge of his Calling, *Jer.* 17. 15, 16. So *Paul* upon ſome, or all of theſe occaſions, avoweth his Calling: *An Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt.* 7. The moſt gracious, able, and eminent Chriſtians, ſhould be, and ordinarily are ſo diſpoſed, as not to deſpiſe the leſſe eminent and weaker; but giving them all due reſpect, are to take their aſſiſtance in any thing wherein they may be uſeful; eſpecially, ſeeing God hath not given all things unto every one, and the meaneſt have ſomewhat whereby they may prove ſteadable to the beſt, 1 *Cor.* 12. 21, 22. So *Paul* joyneth *Timothy* with himſelf in the Inſcription, though *Timothy* was not an Apoſtle, or Penman of Scripture; becauſe he being well known unto thoſe Coloſſians, his aſſent might adde the more weight unto that which is written, and that hereby *Timotheus* might be yet more commended unto them, as being ſo highly honoured by ſuch an eminent Apoſtle; for which cauſe alſo *Paul* giveth him the name of *Brother*, they being fellow-labourers in the Goſpel; *Timotheus our Brother.*

From the deſcription of thoſe unto whom the Epiſtle is directed, *Learn*, 1. Though all the members of the viſible Church be externally Saints, and federally holy, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. yet there are ſome, who, beſides that relative holineſſe, are really Saints, inherently holy, and indued with gracious vertues and qualifications, and ſuch God reſpecteth moſt; for whoſe ſake mainly he ſendeth his word unto others, 2 *King.* 3. 14. for, Paul writeth to the *Saints* in this latter ſenſe mainly, though not excluding the former. 2. Whoever are Saints, are alſo faithfull, and Believers; whoever are Believers, are alſo Saints; and ſo far and in the ſame ſenſe that a man is a

Saint,

Saint, he is a Believer alſo: they who are externally Saints, and federally holy, do profeſſe at leaſt the doctrine of Faith, either perſonally, or parentally; and they who are inherently holy, are alſo inherently and ſavingly Believers, as not only profeſſing the doctrine, but alſo aſſenting to the truth of it, and imbracing it in their hearts; and again, all ſuch Believers are really changed from ſin to holineſſe: So theſe two are here conjoyned, as being of equal extent; *To the Saints, and faithful.* 3. All Saints and Believers, are alſo Brethren, becauſe of their profeſſing the ſame Religion, and worſhipping the ſame God, *Deut.* 17. 20. becauſe of their brotherly love and affection, 2 *Theſſ.* 4. 9. becauſe they have one Father, God, and one elder Brother, Jeſus Chriſt, *Joh.* 1. 12. and becauſe they are all ingrafted in one myſtical body, and quickened by one and the ſame Spirit, *Eph.* 4. 4. as natural Brethren have their birth from the ſelf-ſame parents; ſo the *Saints and faithful are* alſo *Brethren.* 4. There is no ſanctity, faith, or fraternity of any moment unto ſalvation, except it be founded upon Chriſt, flowing from him, and relating to him: whatever is of thoſe among Heathens, and men otherwiſe deſtitute of Chriſt, is only counterfeit, not real; civilizing, not ſaving, *Mat.* 5. 46. ſo they are *Saints, Faithful, Brethren in Chriſt.* 5. After Chriſt's incarnation and death, free-grace hath enlarged it ſelf much beyond its ancient bounds: for, whereas before, the bounds of the people were according to the number of the children of *Iſrael, Deut.* 32. 8. there is now a Church of *Saints and faithfull brethren at Coloſſe.*

From the ſalutation, *Learn,* 1. Gods favour and free-grace is to be ſought after in the firſt place, whether for our ſelves or others, and all other things which tend to our happineſs here, or hereafter, as ſtreams flowing from that fountain; thus Paul wiſheth for *grace* firſt, and *peace* next. 2. Where Gods grace and favour is obtained, all other things proſperous will undoubtedly follow, in ſo far as God ſeeth them to conduce for our good; *Matth.* 7.

11. as appeareth from the connexion between the good things wiſhed for by the Apoſtle: *Grace be unto you, and peace.* 3. Gods grace and favour, together with all good things flowing from it, is the peculiar allowance of thoſe who lay claim to God as theirs, according to the tenor of the Covenant of grace: for, Paul, in ſeeking grace and peace, owneth God as Father; *from God our Father.* 4. As God hath fulneſſe of grace, and of all things neceſſary, to be conveyed unto loſt ſinners; ſo there is no acceſſe unto him, to receive of that fulneſſe from him, but through Jeſus Chriſt, who is Mediator betwixt God and man, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. for, he wiſheth grace from God the Father, *through Jeſus Chriſt.*

Verſ. 3. *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, praying alwaies for you.*

That the Apoſtle may excite thoſe Coloſſians to conſtancy and progreſſe in faith and piety, and in order thereto, procure their attention and benevolence, he ſheweth that he and *Timothy*, did make conſcience of giving thanks to God on their behalf; and this they did alwaies when they prayed for them. *Doct.* 1. So apt are people to reject Truth, when there is any prejudice againſt the Preacher (1 *King.* 22. 8.) that whoſoever would preach to any good purpoſe muſt labour ſo to bear in upon peoples affections, that they may have ground to conceive of him, as of one that loveth them; this the Apoſtle doth here through the whole Preface unto the 12. verſe. 2. As it is our duty in relation to God, *Matth.* 9. 8. ſo it ſpeaketh much our hearty affection unto others, when the graces of God, parts, and abilities that are in them, do not produce carnal emulation or envy, *Numb.* 11. 29. nor flattering commendations of the men themſelves, *Job*, 32. 21. but furniſheth us with matter of thankſgiving unto God: Thus *Paul* doth evidence his affection to thoſe Coloſſians; *We give thanks to God.* 3. God is the Father of Jeſus Chriſt, not only

only as God, by an eternall generation and communication of his whole eſſence unto him in a way unſpeakable *Pſ.*2.v.7. but even alſo as man through vertue of the perſonal union of the two natures in Chriſt, and in a ſpecial way, which doth far excell all other wayes, whereby he is a father to other men and angels, *Luke* 1.32: thus *God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, are one: for, the particle *and*, is exegetick of the ſame thing, and not copulative of things different. 4. In all our performances we ſhould eye God, with a reſpect had to Jeſus Chriſt; ſeeing the Father is well pleaſed only in him, both with our perſons and duties, *Matth.* 3. 17. for, in giving thanks, he eyeth God, with a relation to Chriſt: *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 5. Then is the fitteſt time to give thanks to God for favours beſtowed, when our hearts are ſomewhat elevated to God, and our affections ſomewhat warmed in the duty of prayer; and the duties of prayer and praiſe do mutually contribute for the help one of another: thus the Apoſtle *gave thanks, alwayes praying for them*, that is, alwayes when he prayed for them: for ſo are the words to be ordered, and not *praying alwayes*, as if he had been conſtantly praying for them.

Verſ. 4. *Since we heard of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and of the love which ye have to all the ſaints.*

He declareth the reaſons of his thankſgiving, to wit, thoſe ſpirituall graces which were eminent in them: of which he inſtanceth two, and doth illuſtrate them from their principall object; *faith in Chriſt*, and *love to all the ſaints. Doct.* 1. Where there is ſaving grace in any, there is ſufficient ground of rejoycing in God for them, whatever be their caſe otherwayes: and where this is not, there is little beſides but matter of grief; all other things without this, being but a curſe and ſnare unto them, *Tit.* 1.15. So *Paul* giveth thanks, *having heard of their faith and love.* 2. Of thoſe ſpirituall favours, the injoyment

whereof, is a ground of thankſgiving; faith is among the firſt: for, thereby we are united unto, and have communion with Chriſt, *Eph.*3.17. hereby we are juſtified, *Rom.*5.1. and our hearts purified, *Acts* 15.9. and all our performances accepted, *Heb.*11.4. So he thanketh God for their *faith*, in the firſt place. 3. Though there be no Scripture-truth, unto which, being once made known, the grace of faith giveth not a firm aſſent, *Acts* 24.14. yet Jeſus Chriſt, and thoſe truths which ſpeak of him, are the principall object of ſaving and juſtifying faith; and therefore it is called, *faith in Jeſus Chriſt.* 4. There is a neceſſary connexion betwixt the graces of faith and love, the former without the latter being dead, *Jam.* 2. 17. and the latter without the former, being not reall, but in appearance onely, or at the beſt but a morall vertue, and no ſaving-grace, *Matth.*5.20. ſo they are here conjoyned, *of your faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and your love.* 5. Though Chriſtians are bound to love all men, even their enemies, *Matth.*5.44. yet ſeeing God is to be loved chiefly, and all others but in ſubordination to him, *Matth.* 22.38,39. it followeth, that thoſe are to have moſt of our love, who reſemble God moſt; therefore the love of thoſe Coloſſians was chiefly towards *the ſaints.* 6. We are to lay out our love upon Saints, as they are Saints, for the reality or appearance of good in them, and not for other by-reſpects only, or mainly, as of kindred, friendſhip, or favours beſtowed by them, *Matth.*5.46. neither are we to with-draw our affection from any ſuch, becauſe of their infirmities, their differing from us in opinion, or perſonall injuries received from them, 2 *Cor.* 12. 15. for ſo their love was *to all the ſaints*, none being excepted.

Verſ. 5. *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Goſpel:*

He ſheweth the cauſe moving them to perſevere in thoſe

thoſe graces, to wit, the hoped-for reward of glory preſerved for them in Heaven, and made known unto them; yea, and the hope whereof was wrought in them, *Rom.* 10.17. by the *word of truth*, that is, the Goſpel. *Doct.* 1. The believers portion is not given him in hand, he hath it onely in hope: for, it is called, *their hope*, a thing onely hoped for. 2. The believers portion is laid up for him, and ſafely kept for his uſe, and that in a moſt ſure place, to wit, in *Heaven*, where neither moth, nor ruſt doth corrupt, nor thieves do break through and ſteal; which is *laid up*, to wit, ſafely, as a parent would hide a treaſure for the uſe of his childe; ſo doth the word ſignifie, *which is laid up for you in Heaven.* 3. As there is little to be expected and hoped for on earth by a man who will live godlily, except temptations and croſſes, 2 *Tim.* 3.12. ſo the eying of this rich reward of glory laid up in Heaven, is a ſtrong incouragement to perſevere in faith, love, and other graces: and it is lawful for Chriſtians to have an eye to this reward, as a motive to duty: providing, 1. it be not looked at as a thing to be merited by their obedience, *Rom.* 6.23. Nor 2. As the onely or chief motive, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. thus they were incouraged, not from any thing earthly, but from *the hope which was laid up for them in Heaven.* *Doct.* 4. That ever Heaven and glory ſhould be injoyed by any of loſt mankinde, was a thing that Nature's light could never have dreamed of, except God himſelf had made it known by his Word: thus he mentioneth the hearing of this rich reward by the Word preached, as the mean whereby it was made known unto them, *whereof ye heard in the Word.* 5. It is the word preached which the Lord doth ordinarily bleſſe, as his inſtrument for begetting ſaving faith, and the hope of glory in us: the word not onely propounding and making known to the underſtanding, the object of thoſe graces, which was before hid; but the Lord alſo, at, or after the hearing of this Word, infuſing them into the heart, *Acts* 16. 14. Thus he mentioneth the hearing of it, as the mean alſo, whereby the ſaving

hope of this reward was wrought in them: *whereof ye heard before in the word.* 6. Though the whole Word of God be true, *Pſ.* 19. 9. as being the word of him who cannot lie, *Tit.* 1. 2. yet the Word of the Goſpel is eminently the Word of Truth, as having Chriſt for its main ſubject, who is the way, the truth, and life, *Joh.* 14. 6. and being confirmed by the Teſtatours blood. *Joh.* 18.--37. for, ſaith he, *in the word of truth*, that is, *of the Goſpel.* 7. It is this Word of the Goſpel, the preaching whereof doth make known unto us, and worketh in us that bleſſed hope: the Word of the Law, as diſtinct from the Goſpel, doth onely damne, 2 *Cor.* 3. 6, 7. but the Word of Grace, revealed in the Goſpel, bringeth ſalvation, *Tit.* 2. 11. So the Apoſtle ſpeaking of that glorious reward, he addeth, *whereof ye have heard in the word of truth*, that is, *of the Goſpel.*

Verſ. 6. *Which is come unto you, as* it is *in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth alſo in you, ſince the day ye heard* of it, *and knew the grace of God in truth.*

Having mentioned the Goſpel, he commendeth it, and the Coloſſians joyntly with it: 1. The Goſpel preached to them by *Epaphras*, was the ſame which was preached by the Apoſtles through the world. 2. It had brought forth fruits of an holy life in thoſe who heard it, eſpecially among them. 3. Thoſe fruits were timeous and conſtant. Every one of which particulars, may be looked upon as an additionall cauſe of his thankſgiving to God for them. *Doct.* 1. God bringeth the Goſpel unto a people before they ſend for it: he is found of them who ſought him not, *Iſa.* 65. 1. *which is come unto you*, ſaith he. 2. This is matter of praiſe to God, when the light of the Goſpel breaketh up, where before it was not, and is accompanied with early and conſtant fruits of humility, faith, love, and other graces, among thoſe to whom it is preached: for, thoſe are reaſons why he thanked God for them; *which is come unto you, and bringeth forth fruit,*

fruit, &c. 3. Chriſt can moſt ſwiftly drive the chariot of his Goſpel when he pleaſeth, as appears from this, that within a few years after his death, *it was in all the world*, that is, in all the Airts and principall parts of it, and in oppoſition to that aſtricted diſpenſation under the Old Teſtament. 4. This may ſerve abundantly to commend a doctrine preached, ſo that hearers may ſafely venture on it, as the truth of God, that Firſt, It is the ſame which the Apoſtles did preach through the world, which may be known by their writings, 1 *Joh.* 1.3. although it differ much from that which is taught in the Romiſh Church, or any other particular Church on earth. Secondly, That it bringeth forth fruits of an holy life, as the Goſpel hath alwayes ſome of thoſe fruits, among ſome of them who heard it; and no other doctrine, whether humane Philoſophie, morall precepts, or the Law it ſelf, as diſtinct from the Goſpel, can throughly and inwardly ſanctifie thoſe who have the knowledge of it, *Heb.* 10. 1. Thirdly, That the fruits brought forth by it, are early and conſtant, not as the morning dew, which paſſeth away: for, the Apoſtle, from theſe three, commendeth that doctrine which *Epaphras* had taught them; *as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit ſince the day, &c. Doct.* 5. That the doctrine preached may be fruitfull among a people, it is required, Firſt, That not onely they hear it, but alſo believe it: for, by *knowing*, is meant believing; ſee upon *Phil.* 3.8. *ſince the day ye heard and knew.* Secondly, That uſe be made of, and hold laid chiefly upon the free grace of God through Chriſt; this is pointed at, while he giveth unto the Goſpel the name of *grace*, in relation to bringing forth of fruits: *and knew the grace of God.* Thirdly, That as the Goſpel would be ſincerely taught by Preachers, without any mixture of errour; ſo it would be heard, believed, and the grace which is offred by it, imployed by people ſincerely, not hypocritically, by pretending only to do, when really they do not: for, the word *in truth* may relate both to *Epaphras* his ſincerity in preaching,

ing, and to their reality in practiſing what was profeſſed by them; *and knew the grace of God in truth*, ſaith he.

Verſ. 7. *As ye alſo learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-ſervant, who is for you a faithful Miniſter of Chriſt:*
8. *Who alſo declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

Having commended the doctrine, he commendeth the Preacher, *Epaphras*, in oppoſition to the falſe Teachers, who, it is like, did labour to weaken his authority, becauſe he was not an Apoſtle. He is commended, Firſt, From his relation to *Paul*, as being dear unto him, and a fellow-ſervant with him. Secondly, From his office, as being a Miniſter, enlarged from his fidelity in it, and relation to them, ver. 7. Thirdly, From his reſpect unto them, evidenced by the good report which he had brought to *Paul* of them. *Doct.* 1. Whoever loveth the ſucceſſe of the Goſpel, would by all means labour to beget and entertain a good underſtanding betwixt a faithfull Miniſter and his flock: for, to this end, doth *Paul* commend *Epaphras*, as his *dear fellow-ſervant*, &c. 2. Miniſters eſpecially, ſhould be ſo far from bearing down the deſerved eſtimation of others, & envying of their zeal in the Lords work, leſt it may detract ſomewhat from them, (*Phil.* 1. 15.) that the more zealous a man be for God, the more diligent and faithful in the work of gaining ſouls, he ought, and will (if they themſelves be honeſt) have a greater ſhare of their affections: ſo, becauſe *Epaphras* was *faithful*, he is dear unto *Paul*; *our dear fellow-ſervant, who is a faithful Miniſter*. 3. Whatever odds there be among Miniſters in their gifts and parts, they ought all to draw together in one yoke for advancing of the Lords work; ſeeing there is work for all, *Matth.* 9. 37. and the meaneſt may be helpfull, 1 *Cor.* 12. 21. So Paul looketh on Epaphras as his *fellow-ſervant*, though he was much above him for eſtimation and parts. 4. As the dignity of the Miniſterial-Calling is ſuch, that it challengeth reverence and reſpect from all, unto thoſe who

who are intruſted with it, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. So, a Miniſter who would be reſpected either by God or man, ought to be *faithful*, eying his Maſters glory in the firſt place, and not his own, 1 *Pet.* 4. 11. and promoving to his uttermoſt the ſpiritual good of thoſe who are committed unto his charge, by omitting nothing which may conduce for that end; doing nothing which may hinder it; preferring their profiting to his own profit, pleaſure, and eaſe, 1 *Cor.* 10. 33. yea, and upon all hazard preferring their profit to their ſinful humours, *Gal.* 1. 10. and where this is, it commendeth a Miniſter much; ſo Epaphras is commended in that he was a *faithful Miniſter.* 5. As people would reſpect all the Servants of Jeſus Chriſt, *Phil.* 2. 29. ſo chiefly thoſe who are their own Miniſters, and actually truſted with the charge of their ſouls: for, he will have them reſpecting *Epaphras*, becauſe he was their own Miniſter: *who is for you a faithful Miniſter.* 6. To ſpeak unto the deſerved commendation of thoſe that are abſent, without detracting any thing from their juſt worth, is praiſe-worthy, and evidenceth a man's faithfulneſſe much towards thoſe of whom he ſo ſpeaketh: as the contrary doth argue a man to be unfaithfull, *Jer.* 9. 4. for, this was an evidence of his being faithfull for them; *be alſo declared unto us your love*, ſaith he. 7. Then is love praiſe-worthy, when it is in the ſpirit, or ſpiritual, that is, wrought by the Spirit of God, *Gal.* 5. 22. when it is in a ſpiritual, or renewed heart, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22, 23. and drawn out by ſpiritual conſiderations and motives, chiefly ſuch as the work of grace already in the perſon loved, *Gal.* 6. 10. or ſome hope at leaſt that this work may yet be, where it is not, 1 *Cor.* 13. 7. and not by carnal, natural, or civil motives only, *Matth.* 5. 46. for which reaſons their *love*, is ſaid to be *in the Spirit.*

Verſ. 9. *For this cauſe we alſo, ſince the day we heard it, do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding.*

Having

Having ſhewen how he had thanked God for them, he mentioneth now his praying for them: and this as a further mean to procure their good-will. In this verſe is, firſt, the cauſe moving him to pray, to wit, that he heard by *Epaphras* of their love. Secondly, the manner of his prayer, it was timeous, conſtant, and fervent. Thirdly, the firſt of thoſe things which he prayed for, to wit, increaſe and fulneſſe of the knowledge of Gods revealed will: which knowledge he divideth in two, Firſt, *wiſedome*, whereby we know celeſtiall myſteries revealed in Scripture. Secondly, *underſtanding*, whereby, as it is diſtinguiſhed from *wiſedome*, we know our duty, and the right way of reducing all our knowledge to practice. *Doct.* 1. As the graces of God's Spirit in any, are matter of thankſgiving to God; ſo they are incitements alſo unto prayer for thoſe who have them: for, the graces of the beſt are but imperfect, 1 *Cor.* 13.9. ſubject to decay, *Rev.* 2. 4. and may be abuſed, 2 *Cor.* 12.7. Hence *Paul* takes occaſion from their graces, for which he had bleſſed God, verſe 4. &c. to pray to God for them: *for this cauſe we pray.* 2. As our praying to God for others, doth evidence much our affection to them; ſo, the expreſſions of our ſympathie that way, would be timeouſly begun, and conſtantly continued in: Thus *Paul*, to teſtifie his affection towards this Church, ſheweth, he prayed for them, and that timeouſly: *Since the day we heard it*, and conſtantly, *we ceaſe not*: which is not to be underſtood, as if he had done no other thing but that, he had a rooted deſire after their good, which was alwayes expreſſed by him in prayer, when opportunity did offer. 3. The knowledge of God's will revealed in Scripture, is to be ſtudied above the knowledge of any other thing beſides, as being more ſublime, 1 *Cor.* 2. 6,7. and ſo more pleaſant, yea and more profitable, verſe 27. nor any other: for, whileas he prayeth, that they may be filled *with the knowledge of Gods will*, he ſpeaketh of his revealed will, *Deut.* 29. 29. 4. They who know moſt of God's will revealed in Scripture, come far ſhort of what they ſhould

ſhould know; there is a fulneſſe of knowledge which is attained by none, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. but ſhould be aimed at by all: for, notwithſtanding the Apoſtle had heard of their knowing the grace of God, verſe 6. yet he prayeth here, that they *may be filled with the knowledge of his will.* 5. Our deſires after ſpirituall good, would be inlarged, and in a manner infatiable: great things would be ſought from God; for, he is a great King, *Pſ.* 95. 3. whom it becometh to give largely; ſo he ſeeketh, *that they may be filled.* 6. As *wiſedome*, or kowledge of divine myſteries, and of the things of faith, is requiſite: ſo alſo is *underſtanding*, or knowledge of our duty, and of the right way to go about it; with due reſpect had to time (*Pſ.* 1. 3) place (*Ecc.* 5. 1) company (*Pſ.* 39. 1) and other circumſtances, *Luke* 8. 18. upon the right ordering whereof, the goodneſſe of an action dependeth much, *Pſ.* 50. 23. *In all wiſedome and underſtanding.* 7. The knowledge, wiſedome and underſtanding, mainly to be ſought after, is ſpirituall that is, of things ſpirituall; 1 *Cor.* 2. 2. attained unto by ſpirituall means, as prayer, hearing, reading, and meditation, *Pſal.* 119. 18. *Prov.* 1. 8. and produced in us by the Spirit of God upon the uſe of thoſe means, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. for, he ſaith, *in all ſpiritual wiſedome, &c.* 8. There is no part of this ſpirituall knowledge and wiſedome, the attaining whereof is not to be endeavored by us: ſome truths are indeed more neceſſary to be known than others, *Heb.* 6. 1. yet we are not to ſlight the knowledge of any revealed truth, *Acts* 20. 27. *In all ſpiritual wiſedome and underſtanding.*

Verſ. 10. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God.*

He prayeth, ſecondly, for increaſe of holineſſe to them, or, for ſuch a converſation, as is *worthy of the Lord*: which he brancheth forth in three: Firſt, their aiming in all things to pleaſe him, as the ſcope of all their actions. Secondly,

condly, fruitfulneſſe in good works. And thirdly, growth in the ſaving knowledge of God. *Doct.* 1. Spirituall knowledge, wiſedome, and underſtanding is to be ſought after, not to be puffed up with (*Coloſſ.* 2.18.) or, to reſt upon it, *Luke* 12.47. but that we may order our practice according to it: for, the end why the Apoſtle did pray for knowledge to theſe Coloſſians, is, *that ye may walk worthy of the Lord.* 2. It is not every ſort of walking which is required as the fruit of knowledge; but a *walking worthy of the Lord,* which doth not import a dignity or worth in our walking, to recompence the Lord, but onely a beſeemingneſſe, and not repugnancie to that ſtate whereunto we are called by him (as the ſame word is well rendered, *Phil.* 1. 27.) which may conſiſt with many failings and ſins of infirmity, where there is ſelf-judging for them, *Rom.* 7.14. 3. That we may thus walk worthy of the Lord, it is required, firſt, that there be an habituall purpoſe at leaſt in every action, and an actuall purpoſe in actions more ſolemne and weighty, to pleaſe him by our obedience to him: for, ſo the Apoſtle explaineth *walking worthy*, to wit, *unto all well-pleaſing.* Secondly, there muſt be fruitfulneſſe following upon his pains towards us; and this muſt be in works which are good, as being commanded or warranted by God for the matter, *Iſa.* 29.13. and gone about in the right manner, chap. 3. v. 17. and no good work is to be omitted, unto which we have a calling from God, *Luke* 12.14, *Being fruitful in every good work.* Thirdly, as fruitfulneſſe in good works maketh much for the increaſe of knowledge: ſo, if we would walk worthy of the Lord, we muſt be growing in knowledge: Ignorance in profeſſors, diſhonours God as much as fruitleſſneſſe: for, *increaſing in the knowledge of God,* is joyned with *fruitfulneſs,* and both of them required, in order to their *walking worthy of the Lord.*

Verſ.

Verſ. 11. *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſſe.*

In order to their walking worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleaſing, he prayed thirdly, that they being furniſhed from above with power, might patiently endure whatſoever afflictions they ſhould meet with in the way of their duty, and that with joyfulneſſe. *Doct.* 1. God is well-pleaſed with, and much honoured by thoſe who are chriſtianly, and upon right grounds, patient under the croſſe, and cheerfull: for, in order to their walking worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleaſing, ſpoken of v. 10. he prayeth that they may be *ſtrengthened unto all patiente and long-ſuffering*, in this verſe. 2. So many are our ſpirituall adverſaries, *Eph.* 6. 12. ſo many are their onſets from all hands, 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. and ſo neceſſary is it to overcome not onely one, but *all*, *Heb.* 12. 4. that no leſſe is required than might, and all might, for carrying the victory in this Chriſtian warfare: for, the Apoſtle prayeth for it: *being ſtrengthened with all might.* 3. This might, and *all* might, wherewith Chriſtians are furniſhed, is not their own, they are but weak and infirm in themſelves, even though renewed and ſanctified, *Rom.* 7.--18. their ſtrength muſt be ſought by prayer from God; and, it floweth from no other fountain than the power of God: for, *Paul* ſeeketh it by prayer, and pointeth at the power of God, as the great Magazine from whence it cometh: *according to his glorious power.* 4. The power of God, whereby believers are ſtrengthened, is alwayes glorious, as being ſtill victorious over ſtrongeſt adverſaries, *Rom.* 8. 37. and making weak believers to overcome principalities and powers, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *According to his glorious power.* 5. Chriſtian ſtrength and fortitude, is beſt ſeen under ſaddeſt ſufferings: and when croſſes and hardſhips are entertained with patience, and continued croſſes with long-ſufferings, or with patience

drawn

drawn out in length, it ſpeaketh much of chriſtian ſtrength and courage: for, the effect of their being ſtrengthened with all might, is, *all patience and long-ſuffering*. 6. There is an allneſſe, or univerſality, which ought to be in this grace of patience. Firſt, with reſpect to the ſubject; it ought to quiet the whole man, his hand, his tongue, his heart, *Pſal.* 37. 1. Secondly, to the grace it ſelf, as being without any mixture of paſſion, ſo far as is poſſible, *Jam.* 1. 4. Thirdly, with reſpect to croſſes of all kinds, *Heb.* 12. 4. And fourthly, It ought to be extended to all times, ſo long as the croſſe continues, *Heb.* 11. 27. *Unto all patience. Doct.* 7. Our patience muſt not be unwilling, and, as it were, extorted by force, but ought to proceed from a joyful mind, as knowing all things work together for our good; and that one day we ſhall be above the reach of ſufferings, *Matth.* 5. 12. *Long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs.*

Verſ. 12. *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.*

The Apoſtle, in the ſecond part of the chapter, being to propound a ſhort ſum of chriſtian doctrine, doth by way of thankſgiving, make mention of God the Father his gracious work, whereby he maketh the Elect fit to partake of Heaven, the bright and glorious Inheritance of the Saints. *Doct.* 1. Chriſtian joy, if of the right ſtamp, doth vent it ſelf, not in laſcivious expreſſions, or geſtures, *Eph.* 5. 4. but in thankſgiving to God: for, having ſpoken of their long ſuffering with joyfulneſſe, he ſheweth from his own example, how their joy ſhould be expreſſed, to wit, by giving thanks to the Father. 2. The ſerious conſideration of the admirable work of our Redemption, may make a man rejoyce under the ſaddeſt of croſſes: for, he pointeth at the reaſon of their joyfulneſſe, to wit, the work of our Redemption, whereof he here ſpeaketh. 3. So admirable is the work of our Redemption,

ption, and ſo much of mercy, *Rom.* 5. 8. juſtice, *Iſa.* 53. -9, 10. and divine condeſcendence is manifeſted in it, *Joh.* 3. 16. that *Paul* can hardly ſpeak of this ſubject without giving of thanks to God, and exciting of others to do the like: *Giving thanks to the Father.* 4. Heaven is a lightſom and ſplendid Inheritance, full of the light of knowledge, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. joy, *Pſal.* 16. 11. and glory, *Dan.* 12. 3. for, it's Heaven whereof he ſpeaketh, while he ſaith, *the inheritance in light.* 5. Heaven is the portion of thoſe only, who are Saints: no unclean thing ſhall enter there: for, it is *the inheritance of the Saints.* 6. As the greateſt bleſſing, ſuch as Heaven, & all that is in it, are communicable to loſt ſinners; ſo, that any cometh to Heaven, proceedeth not from his own merit or worth, but from Gods free gift: for, it is called an *Inheritance*, or, as it is in the Original, *a Lot*, in alluſion to the Land of Canaan, where every Tribe enjoyed a portion, not according to their own choice or worth, but as God did meaſure out unto them by lots; ſee *Joſh.* 18. 10, *&c.* 7. None who are unfit or unmeet for Heaven, getteth acceſſe to it: *He makes us meet* before we partake of that Inheritance. 8. Every man in his natural ſtate, is unfit for Heaven, as being under Gods curſe, *Gal.* 3. 13. an heir of Hell and wrath, *Eph.* 2. 3. He finds us unmeet, *and maketh us meet.* 9. It is not in the power of fallen man, being dead in ſins and treſpaſſes (*Eph.* 2. 1.) to quicken himſelf, and come to God, whereby he might be meet for ſuch a glorious Inheritance; it is only God who thus maketh loſt ſinners meet: *who hath made us meet.*

Verſ. 13. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſſe, and hath tranſlated* us *into the Kingdom of his dear Son.*

He explaineth how God doth make us meet, to wit, by drawing us out of that corrupt ſtate of nature, wherein we were detained as ſlaves, and tranſlating us into the ſtate of grace, called Chriſt's Kingdom, as *Rom.* 14. 17.

This he doth in our effectual calling. *Doct.* 1. Man's natural state, is a state of darkness, without the light of saving knowledge, 1 *Cor.* 2.14. solid comfort, *Isa.* 57.21. or true holiness, *Eph.* 2.2. which in Scripture is called *light*, *Matth.* 5. 16. for, our natural state is here called *darkness*. 2. Every man is kept in slavery under the power of sin and Satan, *Eph.* 2. 2. so long as he continueth in that his natural state; we are even under *the power of darkness*. 3. The affections of man by nature are so far engaged to this sinful state, and so far a slave unto it, that except he be plucked out by the strong hand, there is no freeing of him from it: so far is he from rescuing himself by any power preserved in his own free-will after the fall of *Adam*: *He must deliver us* by main force, or, pluck us away, as the word signifieth: *from the power of darkness*. 4. Though God doth not constrain the will of man by force, yet he imployeth omnipotent power to remove his unwillingness, and to make him willing to obey his call, *Eph.* 1.19. *Who hath delivered us.* 5. There is no middle state betwixt the power of darknes, and the state of grace: all who breathe, are either in the one, or the other: the Apostle mentioneth no other state, but the *Power of darkness* and *the Kingdom of his dear Son.* 6. The state of grace, and Gods favour, is called *a Kingdom*: because by grace the hearts of men are subdued to God, as King, whose Laws are full of equity and moderation, *Psa.* 19.7. and who moveth the wills of men sweetly, as being willing subjects in the day of his power, *Psal.* 110. 3. and doth not drive them on by tyranny or force. 7. The state of grace, is, *the Kingdom of his dear Son*, who is appointed of the Father to be head of the Church, by whom all do enter that do come to the Kingdom, *Joh.* 14. 6. and all grace is derived from God the fountain, through him; yea, he dispenseth grace and glory as he thinketh fit, *Act.* 5. 31. even he whom the Father loveth dearly, and through whom all the subjects of this Kingdom are dearly beloved also, *Mic.* 5. 5. *The Kingdom of his dear Son.*

Ver.

Verſ. 14. *In whom we have redemption through his blood* even *the forgiveneſs of ſins.*

He explaineth further how we are meet for Heaven, and delivered from the power of darkneſſe, to wit, by our Redemption in Chriſt, from ſin, Satan and wrath, by vertue of a price paid by the Mediator to the Fathers juſtice, even his blood, which Redemption he explaineth from its principal part, remiſſion of ſins in juſtification: for, *Redemption* is not here taken for the laying down of the price by Chriſt (as *Luke* 2. 38.) but for the fruits flowing from it, not for that compleat redemption and freedom from ſin and miſery, which the godly ſhall enjoy at the laſt day, *Rom.* 8. 23. *Eph.* 4. 30. but for that meaſure of freedom which Believers do enjoy here by faith, ſo that remiſſion of ſins is a principal part of it. *Doct.* 1. As all men by nature are in a ſtate of bondage to ſin, Satan, and wrath; ſo there is no freedom from this ſtate, except Redemption go before: the word *Redemption* ſupponeth both theſe. 2. No way of Redemption could be accepted but that which is by giving of a ranſom and recompence for the wrong done by ſin unto Divine Juſtice: there is no redemption, but *through blood.* 3. None was fit to give this ranſom but Jeſus Chriſt, God and Man: *In whom*, to wit, Chriſt, *we have redemption.* 4. Nothing performed by Chriſt could be a ſufficient ranſom for this end, except he had crowned all his other actions and ſufferings, by laying down his life, and undergoing a bloody and violent death: for, *we have redemption through his blood*, not as excluding his former obedience, but as being the complement and crowning of it, *Rom.* 5. 18, 19. 5. Though Jeſus Chriſt did pay this ranſom unto God, *Eph.* 5. 2. and not to Satan, whoſe ſlaves we are by nature; yet, by vertue of the ranſom paid, we are delivered from Satans ſlavery, and ſins dominion: for, the Apoſtle clearing what he had ſaid, ver. 13. of our being delivered from the power of darkneſſe, he giveth this as a

reaſon, *In whom we have redemption through his blood*: When God the juſt Judge was ſatisfied, Satan the Jaylor, and unjuſt Tyrant, did loſe his right to keep us longer in bonds; ſo that Chriſt doth juſtly deliver the Redeemed Ones from him by force, *Heb.* 2. 14. *Matth.* 12. 29. 6. Though Chriſt by his obedience and ſuffering, did pay unto the Fathers Juſtice a ſufficient ranſom for our Redemption; yet we do not actually partake of that freedom until we be in him, and by faith united to him: *In whom we have redemption.* 7. Sin is the fountain-cauſe of our ſlavery and bondage, ſo that it muſt be removed before our bondage ceaſe: thus, ſpeaking of our Redemption, he inſtanceth it in *the remiſſion of ſin.* 8. Becauſe ſin is a debt, obliging us either to pay an infinite price, or to undertake eternal wrath, *Gen.* 2. 17. therefore, that ſin might be removed, the Son of God behooved to ſhed his blood for our ranſom: We muſt have *redemption through his blood*, otherwiſe there is no *remiſſion of ſin.* 9. When this ranſom is laid hold upon by faith, and we thereby ingrafted in him, the guilt of ſin is freely remitted, and we compleatly pardoned; ſo, being in him, *we have forgiveneſs of ſins.*

Verſ. 15. *Who is the image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every creature.*

The Apoſtle, having mentioned our Redemption, doth here fall upon a deſcription of the Redeemer, and this, both, that in his worth the worthleſneſſe of all other things, whether of Angels, or dead Ceremonies, upon which the falſe Apoſtles did place equal honour with Chriſt (chap. 2. v. 8.) might be ſeen; as alſo that the ſufficiency of his blood, in order to the redemption of ſinners, might the better appear, as being the blood of ſuch an one who is here deſcribed; Firſt, From his internal relation to God: *He is the image of the inviſible God*, as well in reſpect of his eternal generation, being the expreſſe image of the Father, *Heb.* 1. 3. as alſo, that being made

made man, God the Father did in him, and by him, as a lively image, set forth unto us his glorious attributes of wisdom, mercy, righteousnesse and power, *John* 14. 9. Secondly, From his eternal relation to all things created; *He is the first-born of every creature*, as being from all eternity begotten of the Father before any thing was created, and Lord and Heir of all the creatures, as the first-born was among the Brethren, *Gen.* 27. 37. *Doct.* 1. The knowledge of Christs worth, doth contribute much to confirm and illustrate the doctrine of mans Redemption; the excellency and fulnesse of Christ, being that strong *Basis* and corner-stone to uphold, and the great mean to carry on, and throughly to effectuate that admirable work, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. Hence, speaking of man's Redemption, he inserteth in this verse and the three following, this excellent description of Christ, *Who is the image, &c.* 2. As the Divine Nature considered in it self is invisible, it being impossible with bodily eyes to behold him at any time; yea, and also with the eyes of the mind, except indirectly, while we are in this life, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. so the first person of the Godhead is conceived to be in a special manner invisible; because he did never, at least very seldom, appear in any visible shape to men, as the Son did frequently to the Patriarchs, and at his incarnation unto all; the holy Spirit did also appear in the form of a Dove, *Matth.* 3. 16. and of fiery tongues, *Acts* 2. 3, 4. for, the Father is here meant, while he saith, *the image of the invisible God.* 3. As the Son is of the same essence, and one God with the Father; so he is a distinct person from him: for, he is the substantial image of the Father; and an image must be somewhat distinct from that, whereof it is an image. 4. We cannot take up God aright, savingly, or to our comfort, but when we look upon him, as he is represented in the Man-Christ; without whom, God is a consuming fire to sinners; and in whom he is well pleased; So the man Christ is *the image of the invisible God*, a glasse wherein we may behold him. 5. Jesus Christ is true God, having an eternal being; he is not, as

he is God, in the rank of Creatures, but hath a Lordſhip and Dominion over them all; ſo much is in theſe words, *the firſt-born of every creature*: he is *firſt-born*, who was Lord over his brethren, *Gen.* 27. 39 but not *firſt created*; and ſo there is no ground from this Scripture, to reckon him among the Creatures.

Verſ. 16. *For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether* they be *thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.*

17. *And he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.*

He proſecutes the relation which Chriſt hath to things created, holding him forth, Firſt, as their Creator; illuſtrated from a three-fold diviſion of things created: Firſt, from their place, *things in heaven, and things in earth.* Secondly, from their natures, *viſible or inviſible.* Thirdly, he divideth the Angels, one kind of the inviſible creatures, in *thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers*; whereby probably is meant the ſeverall degrees and dignities of Angels; but what thoſe are in particular, is wholly unknown to us. Secondly, he ſets him forth as the laſt end of all the Creatures, v. 16. Thirdly, as being before them all in time, and ſo explaineth how he is *the firſt-born of every creature*: and Fourthly, as the upholder of all the creatures by his power and providence, v. 17. *Doct.* 1. How bent men are to have but low thoughts of Chriſt, and of the ranſome payed by him for the redemption of ſinners, appeareth from the Apoſtle's multiplying of conceptions, to ſet forth his excellencie and worth. 2. Jeſus Chriſt is eternall God, and ſo his blood of infinite worth, *all things being created by him*, as is twice affirmed in this verſe, which can be ſaid of none but God, *Gen.* 1. 1, 3. As the Father hath created all things, *Gen.* 1. 1. and upholdeth all things being made,

by

by the word of his power, *Acts* 17. 28. ſo doth alſo the Son; all thoſe externall works are common to the whole three Perſons, who are onely diſtinguiſhed by their inward Perſonall properties, and order of working: for, *by him*, to wit, the Son, *were all things created*; and *by him all things conſiſt*. 4. There is varietie of Creatures of different kindes, and different excellencies, that man may ſee ſomwhat of God in every kind, (*Pſ.* 104. through the whole) and have ſomwhat whereupon to exerciſe every one of his externall ſenſes, and every one of his inward faculties for that end: there being things *viſible*, and ſo ſubject to ſenſe; and things *inviſible*, which cannot be taken up but by the underſtanding: *things that are in heaven, that are in earth, viſible, inviſible*. 5. All things created, even the moſt excellent, not excluding the glorious Angels, and thoſe who moſt tranſcend others in power and glory, are created by Chriſt, the work of his hands: and ſo not onely are in the rank of Creatures, but of his Creatures, and would be ſo looked upon by us; that he may have his own room in hearts, all other things being contained in theirs; for, *Paul* (that they might not detract any thing of the honour due to Chriſt, by giving it to Angels) extolls him as the Creator of Angels, and of all things, thereby depreſſing them as poor, weak, dependent Creatures; *by him all things were created, that are in heaven, that are in earth, viſible, inviſible, whether they be thrones, &c.* 6. All things are created for Chriſt; the manifeſtation of his glory as God, being the chief end of all, ſo that he is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of them all, *Rev.* 1. 8. all things being as from him, ſo *for him*. The ſetting forth of his glory is a rent due by all Creatures, and is accordingly performed by them: ſome give it in an active way, as Saints, and Angels, *Rev.* 19. 1. ſome in a paſſive way, as damned men, and Devils, *Rom.* 9. 17. and all in an objective way, as having God's glorious attributes exerced about them, and ſhining forth in them, in ſome one, in ſome another; in the Elect, mercy; in the Reprobate, juſtice,

Rom. 9 22. and in all the Creatures, wiſedome, power, and goodneſſe, *Pſal.* 19. 1. for, ſaith he, *all things were for him.* 7. All things created, whether in Heaven or Earth, viſible or inviſible, as they have their firſt being from Chriſt by creation: ſo they are continued and preſerved in that their being, by his providence: if he ſhould but with-draw his upholding hand, they would quickly return unto their firſt nothing, *Pſ.* 90. 3. for, *by him all things conſiſt.*

Verſ. 18. *And he is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*

He deſcribeth Chriſt, thirdly, with relation to his Church, ſhewing firſt he is her Head. Secondly, the beginning, root, and fountain cauſe of the Church, and of all the ſpirituall graces thereof. Thirdly, the firſt who roſe from the dead, never to taſte again of death, the onely one that ever roſe by his own power, and who ſhall raiſe again all his members, whereby his glory is made famous in all things, death it ſelf not being excepted. *Doct.* 1. There is the ſame relation betwixt Chriſt and his Church, which is in the naturall body betwixt the head and the members; Chriſt, as man, being of the ſame nature with the Church, *Heb.* 2. 14. the ſame holy Spirit, which poured out grace on him, *Pſ.* 45. 2. without meaſure, *Joh.* 3. 34. acting and reſiding in his members, *Rom.* 8. 9. 11. all ſpirituall life and motion, *Col.* 2. 19. yea, the common influences of the Spirit, flowing from Chriſt to the Church, *Eph.* 4. 7. there being an indiſſoluble tye betwixt Chriſt and every Believer, *Joh.* 10. 28. Chriſt being of much more worth than the Church is, and ſufficiently inſtructed with power and right to preſcribe Laws unto, and to govern and ſave the Church, *Eph.* 5. 23, 24. the Church again being ſubject to Chriſt's rule and Government, *Eph.* 5. 24. and, if ſeparated from him, would be wholly dead, as deprived of all ſpirituall life

life and motion. *Joh.* 15. 4. for which cauſes, Chriſt, and onely Chriſt, is *the Head of the Church.* 2, Jeſus Chriſt is the firſt beginning, root, and fountain-cauſe of the Church, as being that ſecond *Adam*, from whom all that new ſpirituall birth doth flow, 1 *Cor.* 15. 45. and whoſe vertue, purchaſed and applyed by him, reneweth the heart, and maketh the graces of the Spirit bud up in it, *Cant.* 4. 16. ſo, in relation to the Church, he is called, the active *beginning*, or firſt principle and author thereof, *who is the beginning.* 3. As Jeſus Chriſt was once among the dead; ſo, he aroſe by his own power from death, to immortality and life, whereby he hath ſo vanquiſhed death, that it muſt render up all his followers, 1 *Cor.* 15. 54. each of whom ſhall riſe again from death by that ſame vertue, whereby Chriſt did raiſe up himſelf: for, in this reſpect, he is *the firſt-begotten from the dead*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 20. He maketh them partake of his Reſurrection, as the firſt-born did give the reſt a ſhare of his Fathers goods, whereof he was Heir. 4. There is nothing of Chriſt, no not his very croſs and death, whereby his dignity and worth is not made famous; he having by death, deſtroyed him who had the power of death, *Heb.* 2. 14. and thereby made death it ſelf a paſſage unto life: for *he is the firſtborn from the dead, that in all things*, even death it ſelf not being excepted, *he might have the pre-eminence.* 5. A holy ſoul, zealous for the glory of Chriſt, will make this his ſtudy, to gather matter for extolling Chriſt, even from theſe things which would ſeem to obſcure his honour moſt; thus *Paul* is not content to have him advanced in his works of Creation and Providence; and in his Headſhip over his Church, except he ſhew, that even his death did bring honour to him, in relation to which, he ſaith, that in *all things he might have the pre-eminence.*

Verſ. 19. *For it pleaſed* the Father, *that in him ſhould all fulneſſe dwell,*

20. *And* (*having made peace through the bloud of his croſſe*)

croſſe) by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, by him. I ſay, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

The Apoſtle giveth a reaſon why the Redeemer Chriſt was to be ſuch a Perſon, as is before deſcribed, taken from the Father's will and pleaſure, that he ſhould be one filled with all fulneſſe, both of the Godhead dwelling in him, chap. 2. 9. and of the graces of the Spirit without meaſure, *Joh.* 3, 34. that ſo he might be throughly furniſhed to diſcharge that great work of Mediation, in reconciling the univerſality of the Elect (whether already glorified, or yet upon earth) to a provoked God, having removed the enmity which was betwixt God and them, by the merite of his ſufferings. *Doct.* 1. The reſtoring of broken man to friendſhip with God, and all things tending to it; eſpecially, that Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Perſon of the Trinity, ſhould under-go the work of Mediation for that end, was a thing well-pleaſing unto and appointed by the Father, upon which is grounded the Father's acceptation of what he did for us, as if we had done it our ſelves, which otherwayes he might have rejected: *It pleaſed the Father.* It's an emphaticall word in the Originall, implying no leſſe than an unexpreſſible affection to, and liking of a thing. 2. That any be the Churches Head, it is neceſſary that he be full of God, and of all created graces, even both God and Man; and therefore it is no leſſe than blaſphemie for ſinfull man, Pope, or any other, to aſſume this Title unto himſelf: for, giving a reaſon of this, among other things, why Chriſt is the Churches Head, he ſaith, *for it pleaſed the Father, that in him all fulneſſe ſhould dwell*; importing that none deſtitute of this fulneſſe, is fit to be the Head of the Church. 3. God calleth none to any Office, but ſuch as he fitteth for it; for, being to imploy Chriſt for reconciling all things to himſelf, *it pleaſed the Father, that in him all fulneſſe ſhould dwell.* 4. Chriſt the Mediatour, is indued with all fulneſſe of the Godhead and created graces;

graces: *In him did all fulneſſe dwell.* 5. No leſſe furniture nor this fulneſſe was required for the through diſcharging of the Mediatory-Office, and making up of friendſhip betwixt a provoked God, and rebellious Man: for, in order to that, *in him all fulneſſe did dwell.* 6. Man now fallen, was once in a ſtate of friendſhip with God: for, reconciliation is the making up of old friendſhip, *and by him to reconcile.* 7. All mankinde did fall from the ſtate of favour and friendſhip with God, through *Adam's* tranſgreſſion, *Rom.*5.12. for, reconciliation ſupponeth breaking off of friendſhip, *and by him to reconcile.* 8. As friendſhip with God may be again recovered; ſo, the firſt motion of it cometh from God, who received the wrong, and not from us who gave it: *It pleaſed the Father by him to reconcile.* 9. Nothing ingaged God to make or proſecute ſuch a motion, but his goodwill and pleaſure; no need he ſtood of our friendſhip, nor any loſſe which could come to him by our enmity and hatred. *Job* 22.2,3,4. *It pleaſed the Father to reconcile all things unto himſelf.* 10. Though Chriſt, and grace be intended for, and accordingly doth light onely upon few, *Matth.*7.14. yet the Goſpel and Promiſe, by which Chriſt and free grace is revealed and offered, is drawn up in the moſt comprehenſive expreſſions, and this, that none may hereby be excluded from laying hold on Chriſt and free grace, but ſuch as do exclude themſelves, *Hoſ.*13.9. *To reconcile all things, whether things in heaven, or things in earth*; by which broad expreſſions, is meant onely the Elect (for, there is an univerſality and world even of thoſe, 2 *Cor.*5.19.) and not all the Creatures, not Devils, or Reprobates, *Job.*17.9. Yea, to ſpeak properly, nor yet the Elect Angels, who having never ſinned, was never reconciled; though improperly they may be ſaid to be ſo, in ſo far as through Chriſt they were confirmed in grace, being put beyond all reach and poſſibility of ſinning. 11. As the making up of friendſhip betwixt God and fallen Man, could not be without a Mediatour; ſo, none in Heaven or Earth could

could be in all things fitted to mediate in this matter, but Jeſus Chriſt, God and man; *by him to reconcile*. 12. The making up of this friendſhip did ſtand the Mediator no leſſe than his blood; he did bear the chaſtiſement of our peace, and laid down his life by a moſt ſhameful, painfull, and curſed death; that ſo the juſtice of God being compleatly ſatisfied for our wrong, we might injoy Gods peace and favour with life: for, he ſhoweth the way how he reconciled all, *having made peace* (which is all one with reconciliation) *through the blood of the croſſe*, that is, his blood ſhed upon the croſſe.

Verſ. 21. *And you that were ſometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled,*

22. *In the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in his ſight.*

What he ſpoke of reconciliation in general, he applieth to the Colloſſians in particular, hereby to make way for the following exhortation; and having ſhown the miſerable ſtate wherein they were by nature, as being not only ſtrangers, but enemies to God, and that becauſe of ſin in them, He declareth the gracious change wrought in them, they being put in a ſtate of friendſhip with God, which Chriſt had purchaſed for them, by taking on a true body, ſubject to fleſhly infirmities, though without ſin, *Heb.* 4. 15. and by ſuffering death in it, and all this that they might be preſented free from all ſin, and perfect in holineſſe before God in the laſt day. *Doct.* 1. That general Truths may not be without fruit, being looked upon as remote from us, Miniſters would labour prudently to apply them to the particular ſtate, and ſeverall caſes of hearers; ſo doth *Paul* here, *You hath he reconciled*. 2. As thoſe who are at peace with God, were once in as deſperate an eſtate as others: ſo it concerneth them who are delivered from that ſtate, and would have the ſenſe of that mercy kept ſtill lively and freſh, and not be puffed

up

up with their preſent good condition, deſpiſing others, to be frequently minding that woful caſe wherein they were when firſt free-grace did lay hold upon them; ſo *Paul*, to commend this peace-making mercy in God, doth mind them: *they were ſometimes alienated, and enemies in their mind.* 3. The ſtate of man by nature is moſt miſerable; as being firſt, eſtranged from God, having no ſpiritual communion with him, *Gen.* 3. 8, 9, 24. nor any right or claim to that happineſſe which floweth from the the enjoyment of him, *Pſa.* 58. 3. So, *they were ſometimes alienated*, to wit, by *Adams* fall, as the fountain-cauſe. Secondly, they are enemies to God, as fighting againſt Gods revealed will, *Rom.* 6. 19. and hating God, *Rom.* 8. 7. though not as creator and preſerver of the world, yet as he is a juſt Judge, armed with vengeance againſt thoſe who do wickedly; and God is an enemy to them, *Iſa.* 63. 10. who, though he love his Elect even in their unregenerate ſtate with an everlaſting love, *Eph.* 1. 4. yet ſo long as they are unrenewed, and have not fled to Chriſt by faith, he cannot adjudge them to eternal life, or look upon them any other way, than as men under an actuall obligation to lie under the curſe of the Law, which is eternal wrath; ſo, *they are enemies.* Thirdly, As the cauſe of this enmity betwixt God and man, is no wrong done on Gods part, (*Mic.* 6. 3.) but mans own ſin, and wrong done by him to God: ſo the great part of man's miſery by nature, conſiſteth in this his ſin, whereby the chiefeſt part of him, even his ſoul, and all the faculties of it, to wit, his reaſon, (*Eph.* 4. 18.) will, and affections, *Gen.* 6. 5. (all of which are here ſignified by the mind) are wholly corrupted, from whence doth flow all his actuall wickedneſſe, and ſo much of it, that every action of his is polluted, as proceeding from ſuch a filthy fountain; *Enemies in your mind by wicked works. Doct.* 4. As there is nothing in us to bud or buy free-grace with; ſo by-paſt miſery, though arrived at the height of enmity againſt God, will not impede Jeſus Chriſt to work a miracle of mercy, where he intendeth to be gracious: ſo,

you who were enemies, yet now hath he reconciled. 5. The reconciliation of the Elect unto God, is not from eternity, nor the time of Chriſts death, nor at any time before the ſinner doth beleeve in Jeſus Chriſt: Election indeed is from eternity, *Eph.* 1.4. and ſatisfaction for ſin was given to the Father's juſtice by Chriſt upon the croſſe, *Joh.* 19. 30. but juſtification is not until the ſelf-condemned ſinner aſſent to the bargain, and enter himſelf heir unto Chriſt's purchaſe by faith: for, he ſpeaks of them as *now* being reconciled, having imbraced the Goſpel, when before they were *enemies.* 6. The ſecond perſon of the bleſſed Trinity, in order to our reconciliation with God, behoved to be incarnate, taking on a true fleſhly body, not in appearance only, and ſubject to all the common and ſinleſſe infirmities of fleſh: *reconciled in the body of his fleſh.* 7. It was neceſſary alſo, in order to our reconciliation, for Jeſus Chriſt to ſuffer death in his body; that thus Chriſt our ſurety, and one of the ſame nature with us, being ſeized upon, we the principal debters might be abſolved and ſet free, *Joh.* 18. 8. yet, *now hath he reconciled in the body of his fleſh through death.* 8. As reconciliation with God hath holineſſe of life following on it; ſo the ſanctifying of thoſe who are reconciled, is a work undertaken by Chriſt, which he is to carry on from one degree unto another, until he compleat it at death, and ſo preſent the juſtified perſon *holy, unblamable, and unreprovable in his ſight*, that is, Perfectly ſanctified, as the multiplying of words to one purpoſe doth import, which is not to be accompliſhed untill death, no, nor fully in both ſoul and body joyned together, until the day of his ſecond coming.

Verſ. 23. *If ye continue in the faith grounded and ſetled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Goſpel, which ye have heard,* and *which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven, whereof I* Paul *am made a Miniſter.*

In the third part of the chapter, he exhorts them to per-

perſevere in the faith of the former doctrine, not queſtioning the truth thereof, nor quitting thoſe hopes of good things to come, which was begotten in them by it; and that, becauſe what he had ſpoken of their reconciliation, did depend upon their perſeverance, and the doctrine was the ſame with that which at Chriſt's command was taught through the world by Apoſtles, and which he himſelf was called by God to preach among the Gentiles. *Doct.* 1. Though a Miniſter may ſpeak to a mixed multitude indefinitly, ſometimes as to regenerate perſons, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. becauſe the better part are ſo, *Mal.* 3. 16, 17. And ſometimes as to unregenerate, *Deut.* 29. 4 becauſe the greater part ordinarily are ſuch, *Matth.* 22. 14. yet it is ſafeſt for him alwayes to guard what he ſo ſpeaketh by propounding ſome marks and qualifications of thoſe to whom the thing ſpoken doth belong; leſt people ſtumble by conceiving their ſtate to be either better or worſe than really it is, *Rev.* 3. 17. So *Paul* having ſpoken (verſ. 22) indefinitly of them all, as being reconciled, he doth now reſtrict his ſpeech only to thoſe who had ſaving faith, and would perſevere in it; *If ye continue in the faith.* 2. All thoſe who are reconciled to God, having fled to Chriſt by faith, ſhall undoubtedly perſevere unto the end, as being kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. for, he maketh the reality of their reconciliation depend upon their faith; *You hath he reconciled.* (ver. 21.) *if ye continue.* 3. Exhortations unto perſeverance are to be preſſed upon, and the danger of Apoſtaſie to be held forth even unto thoſe, whoſe perſeverance is in it ſelf moſt certain; theſe being means whereby the Lord worketh perſeverance in them: for, here is ſuch an exhortation unto thoſe who were really reconciled, and ſo ſhould undoubtedly perſevere; and the danger of not-obeying hinted at, to be no leſſe than to die in a ſtate of enmity to God; *If ye continue in the faith.* 4. It is not ſufficient once to aſſent to the truth of the Goſpel in our underſtanding, and to imbrace the good things offered to us by it in our will and affecti-

ons,

ons, but we must persevere in so doing; for, this is the faith of that doctrine in which he exhorteth them to continue, as faith relates both to the will and understanding: *If ye continue in the faith.* 5. That Christians may continue constant in the faith of the Gospel, as well by assenting to the truth of it, as by imbracing the good things offered by it; it is not sufficient to have some fluctuating opinion about the truth of it, but they must endeavour a rooted and well grounded perswasion that it is the undoubted truth of God, *Eph.* 4. 14. Nor is it sufficient to imbrace the good things offered slightly, conditionally, or with a reserve; but sure hold would be taken of them, as we would grip to a thing upon life and death, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. This firmnesse and fixednesse of faith, both in the understanding and will, in order to perseverance against the blasts of tentations and tryals, is set down in the words, *grounded* and *setled.* The first is a metaphor taken from edifices, whose foundations use to be laid upon sure ground; the other taken from seats, in which they who sit are unmovable: *If ye continue in the faith grounded and setled.* 6. As the hope of life eternal, and of those other good things held forth in the Gospel, is a grace which is hardly maintained; there being so many blasts of several tentations to drive us from it, *Luke* 22. 31, 32. So nothing tendeth more to the strengthening of hope, than fixednesse in the grace of faith: and as we turn fluctuating and irresolute in the point of believing, so will the grace of hope be more or lesse shaken: for, these two are conjoyned, *continuing in the faith, grounded and setled, and not being moved away from the hope of the Gospel.* 7. It is the duty of Ministers to keep up the credit and esteem of their fellow-labourers among their Flocks; (though they be much inferiour for parts and graces unto themselves) if so they teach sincerely the same truth, that the work of God may succeed the better in their hands; for, probably because the person and doctrine of *Epaphras*, as being no Apostle, but an ordinary Minister, was the lesse esteemed of by many; *Paul* conciliates,

ciliates reſpect to them both among thoſe Coloſſians, by ſhewing the doctrine preached by him, was the ſame with that which was taught by the Apoſtles to *every creature under Heaven*, that is, to all Mankind, the moſt noble of creatures, and to ſome of all ſorts of men, not in Judea only, but alſo among the Gentiles, which *ye have heard*, to wit, by *Epaphras*, and *which was preached to every creature under Heaven*. 8. As none ought to take on the Calling of the Miniſtery, but ſuch as are called to it; ſo, much weight is not to be laid on the teſtimony of thoſe who run, and are not ſent: for, *Paul* being to confirm the doctrine preached by *Epaphras* from his own authority, doth mention his calling; *whereof I* Paul *am made a Miniſter*. 9. The teſtimony of a called Miniſter to the truth of a doctrine ought to have its due reſpect; *whereof I am made a Miniſter*. 10. The teſtimony of no particular man whatſoever ought to be further truſted, nor it doth agree with that Goſpel which was preached by the Apoſtles to every creature under Heaven: for, *Paul*, to make his teſtimony bear weight, mentioneth not only his Calling, but alſo that he preached the ſame doctrine, which was preached unto every creature; *whereof I* Paul *am made a Miniſter*, ſaith he.

Verſ. 24. *Who now rejoyce in my ſufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for his Bodies ſake, which is the Church.*

Having confirmed the truth of his doctrine from the authority of his own Apoſtleſhip, ver. 23. he now confirmeth his Apoſtleſhip from his ſufferings and chriſtian courage under them, removing alſo thereby the ſcandal of his ſufferings, in reſpect they were his ſhare of thoſe ſufferings which are meaſured out by the providence of God to be undergone by myſtical Chriſt, the Church; and that they were for the Coloſſians, and the whole Churches good. *Doct.* 1. Chriſtians and Miniſters of the Goſpel chiefly, are to be ſo far from ſhunning

sufferings, when God calleth them to suffer, or from grudging, or heartlesse discouragement under sufferings, (*Luke* 9. 26.) that they ought to think it their glory to suffer any thing for Christ and Truth, and so to rejoyce in sufferings: And Gods Servants may attain to such a frame of spirit as this is under sufferings; So did *Paul*; *who now rejoyce in my sufferings*, saith he. 2. As people are apt to stumble and cast at the Gospel, because of contempt, reproach, and other hardships under which those who preach the Gospel do for the most part labour (*Mat.* 13. 55, 56, 57.) their stumbling might be in reason prevented, if they would consider, that all those sufferings are occasioned in a great part by them, in so far, that if it were not for respect to the souls of people, Ministers might do much to shift the crosse, as well as others; *Paul* removed the scandal of his sufferings, thus; *My sufferings are for you*, saith he. If he had not preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, he might have been free of the crosse. 3. The sufferings of *Paul*, and of any other Saint, are the sufferings of Christ, and the filling up of his sufferings: not as if Christ's personal sufferings for the redemption of sinners were imperfect, and so to be supplied by the sufferings of others, see *Heb.* 10. 14. but such is that sympathy betwixt Christ and Believers, *Acts* 9. 4. and so strict is that union among them, whereby he and they do but make up one mystical Christ, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. that in those respects the sufferings of the Saints, are his sufferings, to wit, the sufferings of mystical Christ, which are not perfect nor filled up, until every Member of his Body endure their own allotted portion and share: *I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ.* 4. All that *Paul*, or any of the Elect suffereth, are but small relicts, being compared with that which Christ hath suffered, as the drops upon the brim of the cup: the great wave of affliction did first beat on him, and being thereby broken, some small sparks of it only do light upon us; *I fill up that which is behind*, or the relicts and hinder parts *of the sufferings of Christ.* 5. The cup of affliction and

suf-

ſufferings goeth about by courſe and round: as Chriſt did drink of it firſt, the Apoſtles only ſtanding by, *Joh.* 18. 8. ſo their courſe came next, 1 *Cor.* 4. 9. and thus it hath gone from hand to hand ever ſince: all are not made to drink of it at once, that ſome may ſtill be in a capacity to pity, help, and ſympathize with others, 2 *Cor.* 8. 14. ſo the word rendred *fill up*, ſignifieth to do a thing in our own courſe or turn. 6. As the perſonal ſufferings of Chriſt were for the Churches redemption, and to ſatisfie the Fathers juſtice for the ſins of the Elect, *Act.* 20. v.--28. which he did compleatly, *Joh.* 19. 30. So the ſufferings of the Saints are alſo for the Churches good, though not for her redemption or expiation of ſin, neither in its guilt nor puniſhment, 1 *Joh.* 1. 7. yet to edifie the Church by their example, *Jam.* 5. 10. to comfort her under ſufferings, 2 *Cor.* 1. 6. and ſo confirm that Truth for which they do ſuffer, *Phil.* 2. 17. In which reſpects *Paul* affirmeth his afflictions were *for Chriſts bodies ſake, which is the Church.*

Verſ. 25. *Whereof I am made a Miniſter according to the diſpenſation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God.*

He confirmeth his Apoſtleſhip yet further, from his calling to that Office; and withall giveth a reaſon of his ſuffering cheerfully for the Churches good; he was called to be a Miniſter unto the Church, chiefly among the Gentiles, of whom theſe Coloſſians were a part, and that by the appointment of God; that he might open up and preach the word of the Goſpel fully, or that God by his Miniſtery might fulfill that word of Prophecy and Promiſe of calling the Gentiles in the dayes of the Goſpel, *Zech.* 2. 11. for, *to fulfill the word of God*, may be taken either of theſe wayes. *Doct.* 1. The greater honour, or the more eminent office a man doth enjoy in the Church, he ſtandeth under ſtricter obligation to undergo affliction for the Churches good, and may expect to meet with

the more of a ſuffering lot: for, this engageth *Paul* to rejoyce in his afflictions for the Church; of *which Church*, ſaith he, *I am made a Miniſter*. 2. Miniſters are but Gods Stewards and Servants under him, who being the great Maſter of that Family, which is his Houſe and Church, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. will have all things ordered in it, eſpecially the number of Office-bearers, their calling to, and their carriage in their Office (*Eph.* 4. 11. 1 *Tim.* 3. 1, &c.) according to his own will and preſcript; ſo *Paul* was made a *Miniſter according to the diſpenſation of God*; the word *diſpenſation*, ſignifies the ordering of things belonging to a Family by him who is Maſter of it. 3. Though the Apoſtles were not tied by vertue of their Office unto any certain nation or place, their charge being the broad world, *Matth.* 28. 19. yet becauſe every one could not actually, and with advantage to the Church, diſcharge their Office towards all; therefore either by divine appointment, or mutual agreement, they did divide their Charge among them, *Gal.* 2. 7. yet ſo, as every one might exerciſe their Apoſtolick Authority in every place, as occaſion offered, even without a particular Call from the Church, *Act.* 10. 34. which ordinary Paſtors cannot do without the bounds of their own Charge, 1 *Cor.* 14. 48. In this reſpect *Paul* was to exerciſe his Apoſtleſhip among the Gentiles; *which is given to me for you*, ſaith he. 4. The Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt muſt preach the Word of God, and his full Word, keeping up nothing of the Word, *Act.* 20. 27. and imploy the uttermoſt of their parts, time and pains in ſo doing, 1 *Tim.* 4. 15. for, this is to *fulfill the word of God*, according to the firſt ſenſe given in the Expoſition. 5. What ever word of promiſe is given to the Church, though it be never ſo unlikely, it muſt and ſhall be fulfilled in Gods time; for, *Paul* is made a *Miniſter to fulfill the word*, that is, the word of promiſe for calling of the Gentiles, according to the latter ſenſe.

Verſ.

Verſ. 26. Even *the myſterie which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifeſt to his ſaints.*

He confirmeth the truth preached by *Epaphras* further, from the worth which is in it ſelf, by ſhewing it is an ancient doctrine, hid from the former ages of the Church, but now made manifeſt in the fulneſſe of time to his holy Apoſtles immediatly, and by them to all other ſaints, *Eph.* 3.5. *Doct.* 1. The Goſpel, or doctrine of Chriſtian Religion concerning Chriſt his Incarnation, Natures, Perſon, Offices, Death, Reſurrection, and Salvation thereby acquired unto loſt ſinners, (1 *Tim.* 3. 16.) is an ancient doctrine, as having been before ages and generations, though not revealed; *which hath been hid from ages.* 2. This doctrine is a myſterie, a thing in it ſelf dark and ſecret, ſo that Nature's light would never have found it out, except it had been made manifeſt, yea, and is ſcarcely capable of it when it is revealed: and more particularly, the counſell of God in calling of the Gentiles to the fellowſhip of the Goſpel, without tying them to circumciſion and the other duties of the ceremoniall Law, was wholly hid from the Gentiles themſelves, and from the greateſt part of the Jews, who dreamed of no ſuch thing, yea, the Prophets themſelves did know but little of it: for, this is a part of the myſterie whereof he ſpeaketh chiefly here; *even the myſterie which hath been hid from ages*: See *Eph.* 3. 3. 5, 6. 3. Divine mercies are upon the growing hand; Chriſt and free grace in its full extent, was but dark under the old diſpenſation, as being covered with a vail of many ceremonies, 2 *Cor.* 3.13. but now the vail is removed, Chriſt and free grace are clearly preached, and ſhine forth in their native beauty and luſtre; *but now is made manifeſt.* 4. Though the Goſpel be now made manifeſt, yet they are onely ſaints and truly gracious, who attain unto the full, through, and ſaving knowledge of it, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. wicked men have

ſome inſight in it, but they know it not ſo, as to prize it, 1 *Cor.* 1.18. ſo as to believe it, and venture their Heaven and happineſſe upon it, *Joh.* 5.40. nor yet ſo, as to walk like it, *Matth.* 7.22,23. Thus it is a *myſterie made manifeſt unto the ſaints.*

Verſ. 27, *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this myſterie among the Gentiles, which is Chriſt in you, the hope of glory.*

He ſheweth, that the cauſe of this manifeſtation was God's will and pleaſure, and withall commendeth and explaineth the thing manifeſted, as being a rich and glorious myſterie, the ſum whereof is Chriſt himſelf, who, dwelling in us by faith, is the hope of glory. *Doct.* 1. That the doctrine of ſalvation through Chriſt, was ſo long hid from the Gentiles, and but obſcurely propounded to the Jews, and now in the fulneſſe of time made manifeſt; and, that it is revealed to one Nation, and not to another, and worketh effectually in ſome, and not in others, (*Matth.* 11.25,26.) proceedeth from God's good-will and pleaſure, ſo that it is a matter full of temerity and raſhneſſe to inquire unto any higher cauſe; the Apoſtle reſts on this, *to whom the Lord would make known.* 2. As the Goſpel is a myſterie, ſo it is a rich one, wherein God layeth out the great and unſearchable treaſures of his mercy, goodneſſe and grace, *Joh.* 1. 17. and the embracers of this doctrine are made truly rich, as being reſtored unto favour with God, cloathed with a perfect righteouſneſſe, *Rev.* 3.18. having received a new right unto all the creatures through Chriſt, *Tit.* 1. 15. thoſe are riches, without which the whole world is but miſerable beggers, *Rev.* 3.17. *what is the riches of this myſterie.* 3. The Goſpel is a myſterie full of glory, no doctrine manifeſting more of God's glory in all his attributes of mercy, wiſdom, juſtice & truth, *Luk.* 2.14. and they who imbrace it, are made thereby glorious, as having a promiſe of a right unto, yea, and begun poſſeſſion of

of glory now, *Joh.* 3.36. and ſhall attain to the full poſſeſſion of glory hereafter, 1 *Joh.* 3.2. for, he ſpeaketh of the *glory of this myſterie.* 4. It is no ſmall myſterie, that Chriſt ſhould take up houſe with, and dwell in ſinners; *this myſterie*, ſaith he, *which is Chriſt in you.* 5. Jeſus Chriſt is the Sum of the Goſpel, in whom there is much hid and glorious riches, no leſſe than treaſures of wiſdome and knowledge, chap. 2. v. 3. So the Apoſtle, explaining what is this myſterie, and the riches and glory of it, gives Chriſt for all, *which is Chriſt in you.* 6. Chriſt dwelling by faith in the hearts of people here, is the hope of that glory to be poſſeſſed hereafter, as being the Author of that hope, 2 *Theſſ.* 2.16, as alſo the earneſt of that glory, *Eph.* 1.14. the full accompliſhment whereof, ſhall be the full injoying of him, *Phil.* 1.23. whom we do now injoy but in part, and by faith, 1 *Cor.* 13.12. *Chriſt in you the hope of glory.*

Verſ. 28. *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wiſedome, that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.*

He returneth to that argument, which he uſed formerly to confirm the doctrine preached to them by *Epaphras*, taken from his preaching of the ſame doctrine himſelf, and ſheweth the principall ſubject of his preaching was Chriſt, together with the way how he preached him, labouring to rectifie the will by *warning*, and to inform the judgement by *inſtructing*, concealing nothing of that ſaving wiſedome revealed in Scripture; and this without reſpect of perſons, endeavouring here by to bring all men to Chriſt, by a lively faith, (not to the Angels, and Legall Ceremonies, as the falſe Apoſtles did) that ſo they might be made perfect in him. *Doct.* 1. As the main ſubject of Miniſters preaching ought to be Jeſus Chriſt; ſo, the reproving of ſin, exhortation to duty, inſtruction in knowledge, is no wayes inconſiſtent, but agreeth well with the preaching of Chriſt: for, *Paul's* preaching

did run upon both thoſe, *whom*, ſaith he, to wit, Chriſt, *we preach, warning and teaching.* 2. Miniſters in their reproofs and preſſing of duties, would beware of drawing people off Chriſt, to ſeek a righteouſneſſe in themſelves; but would thereby labour to drive them to Chriſt for righteouſneſſe, to cover the guilt of the ſin reproved, *Rom.* 10. 4. and for furniture to inable them to go about the duty which is preſſed, *Rom.* 13.14. that ſo while they warn and exhort, they may be ſtill preaching Chriſt; thus did *Paul, whom*, to wit, Chriſt, *we preach, warning and teaching every man.* 3. The underſtanding of man by nature is dark and wholly blind in the things of God; elſe there were no need of *teaching*: and his will and affections are moſt perverſe and backward; elſe there were no need of warning; *warning every man, and teaching.* 4. The great part of a Miniſter's work lyeth in thoſe two, to inform the underſtanding by *teaching*, and to rectifie the will and affections by admonition, rebuke and conſolation, which here goeth under the name of *warning*: and theſe duties are to be diſcharged by a Miniſter unto all within his charge, without reſpect of perſons; *warning every man and teaching every man.* 5. As it is the duty of a Miniſter to conceal nothing of ſaving truth revealed in Scripture: ſo, all ſaving truth, and eſpecially the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt revealed in the Goſpel, containeth in it much wiſdome, yea all wiſedome, ſo that any other wiſedome without this, is nothing elſe but meer folly; for, this makes men wiſe unto ſalvation, 2 *Tim*, 3. 15. So he *taught every man in all wiſedome*, that is, in the doctrine of the Goſpel. 6. The publick Miniſtery is God's ordinary mean for the reducing of ſtraying and wandering ſinners, to Jeſus Chriſt; that being cloathed with his righteouſneſſe, and renewed by his holy Spirit, they may be made perfect in him, and preſented ſo in the laſt day; *that we may preſent every man perfect in Jeſus Chriſt.* 7. It ought to be the great end which all Miniſters ſhould aim at, to get all of thoſe who are committed to their charge (as being ignorant

of

of God's ſecret decree concerning any of them, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19) ſo brought to Chriſt, that *every man may be preſented perfect in him*; this was *Paul's* aim.

Verſ. 29. *Whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

He further commends his Miniſtery, Firſt, from his great pains taken for bringing about the end of it aforementioned, by *labouring* and *ſtriving*; the firſt word expreſſeth his great labour in doing, by travelling through ſo many Nations, preaching ſo frequently, diſputing ſo accurately with the adverſaries of truth, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. The ſecond expreſſeth his patience under many hazards and ſufferings, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23. Secondly, from the moſt effectuall help, whereby God did aſſiſt him and bleſſe his Miniſtery with ſucceſſe wherever he came. *Doct.* 1. The gaining of ſouls to Chriſt, is a work which cannot be effectuated without great labour and pains; yea, and great wreſtling and ſtrife, what with mens corruptions and humours, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 2. what with manifold diſcouragements ariſing from within a man's ſelf, 2 *Cor.* 7. 5. and what with multitudes of croſſes and ſufferings, which Satan's malice doth uſually procure unto a faithfull Miniſter, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 18. So that whoſoever proponeth eaſe, pleaſures, riches and honour unto himſelf in the Miniſteriall Calling; if ſo he be faithfull, he'll meet with diſappointment: he muſt reſolve to labour in the Word, and under croſſes for the Word; *Paul* found it ſo; *whereunto*, that is, that he might preſent ſouls unto Chriſt *I alſo labour*, (the word ſignifieth, to labour unto wearineſſe) *ſtriving*. 2. All the labour and ſtriving of Miniſters will not prevail to the gaining of ſouls, without divine aſſiſtance, and Chriſt's effectuall working with their labours; *ſtriving according to his working*, ſaith he. 3. When Miniſters meet with any ſucceſſe in their Miniſtery, they are not to be puffed up with it, or aſcribe the praiſe to their own diligence, piety or parts,

1 *Cor.*

1 *Cor.* 15. 10. but are to acknowledge thankfully God's helping hand in it; So doth *Paul*, *his working, which worketh in me mightily*. 4. The many hardſhips and ſufferings, or extraordinary pains and labour which attend the Miniſteriall Calling, ought not to deterre any from it, who is otherwayes fitted and called; becauſe there is divine help, corroborating ſtrength, and anſwerable furniture allowed unto, and will be forth-coming for thoſe who are imployed in it; ſo did *Paul* finde in his own experience: *his working, which worketh in me mightily*, ſaith he.

CHAP. II.

IN the firſt part of this Chapter, the Apoſtle maketh way for the refutation of ſome errors, by an inſinuating Preface; wherein he ſheweth, what a conflict he had for them, v. 1. that they might be comforted, united, and grow in the knowledge of Chriſt, v. 2. whoſe fulneſſe is held forth, v. 3. and that they might be guarded againſt ſeducers, v. 4. And becauſe of his affection unto them, v. 5. He exhorts them therefore to adhere to the doctrine received, v. 6. preſcribing ſome helps for conſtancie, v. 7.

In the ſecond part, he refuteth ſome contrary errors, reducing them to three heads, abuſed Philoſophie, ſuperſtitious rites, and Moſaicall ceremonies, v. 8. which he refuteth joyntly, from the fulneſſe which is in Chriſt, v. 9. and our being compleat in him, v. 10. He refuteth the neceſſitie of Circumciſion in ſpeciall, becauſe in Chriſt, we have the thing ſignified by it, v. 11. and an externall ſeal, to wit, Baptiſme in the place of it, v. 12. Chriſt had renewed them without it, v. 13. and abrogate the whole ceremoniall Law by his death, v. 14. yea, and triumphed over all their ſpirituall enemies, v. 15.

He

He concludes therefore againſt their ſubjecting of themſelves to that yoke, v. 16. becauſe Chriſt, the ſubſtance of thoſe ſhadows, was come, v. 17. He argueth againſt the ſecond head, to wit, worſhipping of Angels, from the ignorance, and pride of thoſe who preſſed it, v. 18. and their impairing the honour of Chriſt, as Head, v. 19. He argueth againſt the ſuperſtitious rites, giving ſome inſtances of them; becauſe they were freed from the Moſaicall rites, v. 20, 21. and they thereby placed Religion in things periſhing, without any authority, except humane, v. 22. and taketh off ſome fair pretexts, whereby their Patrons did defend them, v. 23.

Verſ. 1. *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not ſeen my face in the fleſh.*

THe Apoſtle, being to refute ſome errors contrary to the former doctrine, maketh way for his work; and yet again inſinuateth upon their affections, by letting them know, that he was no leſſe ſolicitous in all his actions and ſufferings, that they, their neighbouring Church at Laodicea (to whom he willeth this Epiſtle to be read, chap. 4. v. 16.) and all other Churches, whom he had never ſeen in the face, might be eſtabliſhed in the truth, than he was for thoſe, among whom he had frequently converſed. *Doct.* 1. When a people doth once incline to error, ſo ready are they to miſtake thoſe who would labour to reclaim or eſtabliſh them, (*Gal.* 4. 16) that a Miniſter would uſe more than ordinary diligence to inſinuate upon their affections, and guide dexterouſly againſt miſtakes and prejudices, when he is to meddle with any thing of that kinde: So the Apoſtle, beſide his generall preface to the whole Epiſtle, uſeth here a particular one, when he is to refute ſome errors, wherewith this Church was moſt infeſted. 2. Though the men of this world be little ſolicitous for thoſe,

those with whom they have not particular acquaintance, *Matth.* 5. 45. and Christians are sometimes too apt to mis-judge those who are dear unto God, according to this rule; yet so many are the tyes among the Members of Christ, (1 *Cor.* 10, 17.) that, as it is the duty of every one to promove the good of others (even though they had never seen them) so there are some who do make conscience of this duty; for, the Apostle supposeth, that those Colossians were apt to judge of him, as minding their case little, however he minded the case of others, chap. 1. v. 29. and therefore he sheweth his solicitous care for them also; and this, that the mistake might be removed; as is imported by the causall particle *for*, which knitteth this purpose with the former; *for I would that ye knew.* 3. As faithfull Ministers will necessarily have a fighting life, and many sore conflicts both in body and spirit: so, to make it known unto the people, what sore travell they endure of this kind, if it be not out of ostentation and desire of applause, (2 *Cor.* 10, 18.) is lawful and profitable: for, hereby people are made to bear burden with their Minister, excited to minde their own salvation the more, (the care whereof lyeth so heavie upon their Pastors) and disposed for the more ready receiving of the word from their mouth: So *Paul*, *I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you.* 4. Ministers in speaking of their affection towards people, and of their pains flowing from it, and Christians also in making known their respects one to another, should beware of flattering those to whom they make their respects and affections known, and would guard carefully against the very suspicion thereof: So *Paul*, lest he should incur any such suspicion, joyneth not onely those of Laodicea, but also all other Churches, as partaking equally of his Apostolick care; *and for them at Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face.*

Ver.

Verſ. 2. *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding, to the acknowledgment of the myſterie of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt.*

He giveth reaſons of his great conflict for their confirmation in the Truth, and why he made them know ſo much; hereby they ſhould reap much ſolid comfort, their hearts ſhould be inſeperably knit together in love, and attain to a large meaſure of rooted and experimentall knowledge of the myſterie of the Goſpel. *Doct.* 1. All men are naturally deſtitute of ſolid comfort, and even the People of God, when driven to extremities, (chiefly when the truth of the Goſpel, from which they did draw their conſolation, is queſtioned) do finde their comfort much brangled: *That their hearts might be comforted*, ſaith he: So, for the time their comfort was ſhaken, the truth of the Goſpel being by thoſe Maſters of error queſtioned. 2. It is only the doctrine of the Goſpel which ſetleth a diſconſolate and afflicted ſpirit moſt: and to have that doctrine confirmed, when erring ſpirits would call it in queſtion; and to know alſo that others, dear to God, ſympathize with us in our ſtrait, contributeth much to our eſtabliſhment and comfort: ſo the Apoſtle's care and pains to have them eſtabliſhed in the truth of the Goſpel, which was then queſtioned, and the manifeſtation thereof to them, did contribute for their comfort: *That their hearts might be comforted.* 2. Unity of heart and affections in the Church, is ſo neceſſary, that the want of it doth obſtruct much that ſolid comfort, which might otherwayes be reaped by the Goſpel: for, he ſuſpendeth their comfort, upon their being *knit together in love*, as a piece of timber joyned by a Carpenter; for, ſo the word ſignifieth. 4. Unity of heart and affections, dependeth much upon union of judgments and conſtancy in Truth: where there is diſcord in the underſtanding about main and ſubſtantial Truths, there can be no through

through and lasting concord of the will and affections: for, he makes *their being knit together in love*, one fruit of their constancy in Truth, for procuring whereof his conflict was. 5. Christians are not to rest contented with the knowledge of common and easie principles of Christianity, (*Heb.* 6. 1.) but are to grow in the knowledge of other more difficult truths, such as relate to various cases, and the defence of Truth against Adversaries; and growth in these, doth follow upon perseverance in Truth: for, such a growth is meant by the *riches of understanding* here spoken of, as another fruit of constancy in Truth. 6. Neither are they to rest upon a fluctuating doubting knowledge, but to endeavour a full perswasion and assurance, both of the truth of the Gospel in general, and of their own particular interest in the promises thereof: and this also is attained by stability in the Truth: for, it is the *full assurance of understanding* here spoken of, as another fruit of constancy. 7. Neither are they to rest upon simple knowledge of Gospel-truths, (*Matth.* 7. 21.) but are to know them with affection and love to them; they are to take a proof of the truth which is in them, and so from experience to know them: this much is imported in the word rendered *acknowledge*, signifying to know again, and with knowledge above ordinary. 8. As God is the author of the Gospel, his eternal wisdome having found it out, *Eph.* 3. 10. and as Christ was the Fathers Ambassador to preach and reveal it, *Matth.* 12. 18. So God, and the Father, and Christ are the prime object of the Gospel: the unity of the Godhead, and distinction and order of the persons, the incarnation of Christ, his person, natures, and offices, his saving benefits, and love to sinners (which are all in themselves dark and mysterious) being plainly revealed therein; hence the Gospel is called *the mysterie of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*

Vers.

Vers. 3. *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdome and knowledge.*

The words are read by some as relating to the Gospel, in which is contained the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, both of those which are only to be known and believed, and of those which are also to be practised: but they are taken more commonly as relating to Christ, in whom, as in a house of store, is laid up all saving knowledge, to be imparted unto those who labour to know him. Both senses come to one, Christ being the main object of the Gospel, and both tend to the same scope, which is to hold forth a sufficiency in Christ and the Gospel, in order to the salvation of sinners, without the help of Angels, or vain traditions; the necessity of whose help was urged by the false Apostles. *Doct.* 1. There is in Christ and the Gospel, sufficiency of knowledge in all things necessary to salvation; Christ being the very way to life, *Joh.* 14. 6. and the Gospel that doctrine, which holdeth forth this way compleatly, *Joh.* 20. 31. Christ having also received the habits of all created knowledge, as of all other graces without measure; that therby he might be fitted as Mediator, to bestow the grace of saving knowledge upon all the Elect in a competent measure, *Joh.* 1. 16. *In whom are all the treasures.* 2. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a thing most precious, and most inriching of those who have it: hence is it called *treasures.* 3. Notwithstanding of all that is revealed of Jesus Christ; yet his worth is unsearchable; the most able of created understandings cannot reach the depth thereof; so, *in whom are hid all the treasures.* 4. This fulnesse of knowledge ascribed to Christ, maketh nothing for the Ubiquitarian error, as if Divine omniscience were inherent in the humane nature: for, though it should be granted, that by these treasures were meant Divine omniscience; yet he saith not *in which humane nature*, but *in whom*, that is, in his person (to wit, according to the Divine Nature) *are hid all the treasures.*

Vers.

Vers. 4. *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

He gives a further reason of his so great care to establish them in the Truth, or of his mentioning that fulnesse of knowledge, which is in Christ and the Gospel; that hereby they might be guarded against all Seducers, who intended to draw them from Christ and the simplicity of the Gospel, whether by false arguments, or insnaring perswasions. *Doct.* 1. As Satan doth endeavour to sow the seed of Error, where-ever the Gospel is preached; so Ministers should guard people as well against error in opinion, as against prophanity of life; the one being damnable as the other, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. Thus doth *Paul* here, *This I say, lest any man beguile you.* 2. Ministers should labour to instruct their people well in the positive grounds of Christian Truths, especially in the knowledge of Christ and that fulnesse of sufficiency which is in him, as a most soveraign antidote against all those Errors which tend to draw the mindes of people from him: And whosoever would meddle with the study of controverted truths without hazard and to any good purpose, ought first to drink in the knowledg of those positive grounds: for, the Apostle proceedeth in this method, first, instructing them in those; and next, dehorting them from contrary errors: *and this I say, lest any man should beguile you.* 2. As Satan laboureth to engage ableſt wits in the way of errors; so, when such are engaged they spare no pains for seducing of others, abusing their parts and gifts, otherwise profitable for that end, to wit, that they may blind the understandings of people by sophistical arguments, which conclude not what they seem to hold forth, and lead captive their affections by deceitfull and insinuating perswasions; so, those Seducers against whom the Apostle doth here guard, were men endued with logick and eloquence: both which they abused for seducing the people; the first, by using false arguments,

ments, *leſt any man deceive you*; the word ſignifieth, to deceive by not-concluding arguments; The ſecond, by uſing ſubtile perſwaſions, called here, *intiſing words.*

Verſ. 5. *For though I be abſent in the fleſh, yet am I with you in the ſpirit, joying and beholding your order, and the ſtedfaſtneſſe of your faith in Chriſt:*

He giveth another reaſon of his ſolicitous care for them, to wit, the inward affection which he carried to them: hereby alſo he anticipateth an objection, how he who lived at ſuch a diſtance, and was unacquaint, could take upon him to preſcribe unto them; and ſhoweth, though he was abſent from them in body, yet he was preſent with them in ſpirit, both by his affectionate minding of them; and, as it ſeemeth by the knowledge which he had of their affairs, through extraordinary revelation, ſee 2 *Kings* 5.26. and while he commendeth the preſent appearance of Gods grace in them, he doth indirectly exhort them to hold on and perſevere. *Doct.* 1. It is not alwayes given unto Gods children, to injoy the bodily preſence of thoſe who might be profitable unto them; for, *though I be abſent in the fleſh.* 2. But there is a ſpirituall preſence, which may and ought to be intertained in caſe of bodily abſence, which conſiſts in mutuall minding of the caſe of others, (2 *Cor.* 7.3.) in being ſutably affected with their caſe, whether it be good or bad, (*Heb.* 13.3.) in praying to God for, and by all lawfull means procuring the good of others, chap. 4.12, 13. and eſpecially Miniſters ſhould never be totally abſent from their flocks; but, as *Paul*, *being abſent in the fleſh*, ought to be thus *preſent with them in the ſpirit*, and be ſutably affected with their caſe, as he was; *joying and beholding their order.* 3. Where the lives of Profeſſours within a Church are orderly and pious; where the order of Church-Government is in vigour and flouriſheth; where there is unity in a Church, every one keeping his ſtation, and helping others in their ſtation, as a well-

ordered Army with banners: as each of those doth contribute to the rest; so, all of them concurring, makes the Church a joyfull object to beholders: for, *Paul* did *joy beholding* their order, to wit, in holy walking (2 *Thess.* 3. 6.) in exercise of discipline, (*Tit.* 1. 5) and in their unite on-going, *Cant.* 6. 10. 4. Where the order of Church-Government chiefly, is in vigour, it contributeth much for keeping Professours steadfast in their assenting unto, and avowing of the doctrine of faith: Christ's Discipline, is a strong hedge to defend his doctrine: so, *beholding their order*, he beholdeth also *the stedfastnesse of their faith:*

Vers. 6. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

He concludeth the Preface, exhorting, that as they had received Christ, to wit, in their judgments, by assenting to the truths which were delivered unto them by *Epaphras* concerning him, chap. 1. v. 7. and in their hearts, by esteeming of, adhering to, and believing in him, chap. 1. 4. and in their practice, by setting about those duties which such receipts called for from them, chap. 1. 6. And, as in all those, they had taken Christ for their onely Lord and Law-giver, not as a conjunct onely with *Moses* and the Angels; so they would continue constant, and make progresse in all those. *Doct.* 1. Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of all saving doctrine, (1 *Cor.* 2. 2.) the marrow of all the promises (2 *Cor.* 1. 20.) the fountain, furniture, and main scope of an holy life, (*Eph.* 4. 21, 22.) so that the receiving of him, is the thing most to be aimed at in all the Ordinances, as that which maketh our knowledge compleat, our faith saving, our obedience acceptable: for, here, the Apostle's pointing at their practice in all those, giveth this as the compend of all, *as ye have received Christ.* 2. It is not sufficient that Christ be once received in our understanding, affection and practice; but there must be constancie and pro-

progreſſe made in receiving of him: for, the word *walk* importeth thus much; *ſo walk*. 3. The example of progenitours, and our own former practice, layeth on a ſtrong tye to continue conſtant in our profeſſion and practice if it be a profeſſion of truth, and practice of duty: for, the Apoſtle argueth from their own former practice, *as ye have received, ſo walk*. 4. No cuſtome, though never ſo ancient, no example of progenitours, or former practice of our own, ought to make us continue in any practice, which is ſinfull; or doctrine, which is falſe and erroneous: for, he exhorts them to continue in this doctrine, not ſimply, from the receiving of it; but becauſe they had *received Chriſt the Lord* in it, and ſo it was true and orthodox doctrine. 4. As the life of a Chriſtian ought to be in a perpetuall motion from ſin to holineſſe, from the World to Heaven; ſo, Chriſt is the way, through which he muſt move: for, he commands *walk in him*; he muſt be *in him* by faith, and ſo reconciled, *Rom.* 8. 1. the truth of Chriſt muſt be the rule of his walking, *Eph.* 4. 21, 22. and he muſt walk by vertue of influence which cometh from him, *Phil.* 4. 13.

Verſ. 7. *Rooted and built up in him, and ſtabliſhed in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

He preſcribeth ſome means for attaining to conſtancie and progreſſe; Firſt, ſtability of faith in adhering firmly to Chriſt, and that truth wherein they were taught. Secondly, abounding in this grace. Thirdly, thankſgiving for the ſame. The firſt doctrine which ariſeth from the ſcope, is already marked, chap. 1. v. 23. *Doct.* 4. to wit. *Doct.* 2. The gripe which faith doth lay upon Chrtſt, is like unto that which the tree hath in the ground, and ſo is moſt ſure: for, though the top of the tree doth ſhake, yet the root remaineth firm, and its firmneſſe is from the ſolidity of the ground, through which the roots are ſpred; its fruitfulneſſe alſo is by vertue of ſap conveyed from

the ground by the roots; ſo, the ſtability of Believers, floweth from Chriſt, *Jo.* 10. 28,29. and ſap and influence is conveyed from him by faith, for making them fruitfull, *Jo.* 15.5. Thus the firmneſſe of their faith is ſet forth by a Metaphor taken from trees deeply rooted: *rooted in him.* 3. The bond of faith, whereby Believers are knit to Chriſt, is like that whereby the edifice is faſtned to the foundation; the foundation upholdeth the houſe, ſo doth Chriſt the Believer, *Matth.* 16.18. The reſt of the building is made conform to the foundation; ſo, the copy of a Believers life is taken from Chriſt, *Matth.* 11.29. the ſtones of the building, by taking hand with the foundation, are faſtned one to another; ſo faith taketh hand upon Chriſt, and in him with others who are Chriſt's, 1 *Joh.* 1.7. for, faith is ſet forth with relation to Chriſt, by a ſecond Metaphor taken from edifices ſtrongly founded; *built up in him.* 4. There is an innovating humour in people, flowing from itching ears, 2 *Tim.* 4.3. whereby they weary of old truths, and hanker after new-fangled errors, ariſing from little conſcience made to practiſe according to thoſe truths, *Joh.* 7.17. This the Apoſtle guardeth againſt, by exhorting them ſo often to continue in the doctrine already received; *as ye have been taught,* ſaith he. 5. As there ſhould be ſtability, ſo there would be growth in faith, even to *abounding therein.* Faith groweth in bredth, by extending our knowledge and aſſent to moe divine truths, *Heb.* 6.1. it groweth in hight, when one degree of faith is made a ſtep unto a further, as faith of dependance unto aſſurance, 2 *Pet.* 1.10. it groweth in length, when its acts are not interrupted, but conſtant, *Job* 13.15. and it groweth in depth, when it groweth more rooted and ſolid; whereof before chap. 1. v. 23. And as this growth even to abounding in faith, is neceſſary to make a man conſtant in the faith; ſo it is preſcribed for this end; *abounding therein.* 6. Thankſgiving for what we have received of faith already, is an effectuall mean to make us conſtant, grow and abound therein, which holdeth alſo in all other graces; *abounding therein with thanksgiving,*

Verſ.

Verſ. 8. *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt.*

Having ended the Preface, he ſtateth the controverſie, reducing thoſe Impoſtors, whereof he would have them to beware, leſt they ſhould be made a prey of by them, unto three heads. Firſt, Abuſed philoſophy, whereby under pretence of reaſon (which was indeed but deceiving) ſeveral things; and particularly, as it appeareth from ver. 18. the worſhipping of Angels was preſſed upon them, contrary unto the Word: all which doctrine he rejecteth as vain and deceiving. Secondly, Superſtitious and fooliſh rites, obtruded as parts of divine worſhip, having no other warrant but cuſtom, antiquity, and the authority of men. Thirdly, Levitical rites, and Moſaical ceremonies, which were earthly and carnal rudiments, or beginnings fitted for the infancie of the Church under the old Teſtament: all which he rejecteth upon this general reaſon, they were not according to the doctrine of Chriſt, and did draw away Chriſtians from him. *Doct.* 1. Chriſtians are Chriſt's flock, and the doctrine of the Goſpel a ſheep-fold, wherein ſo long as they remain they are ſafe, and when they depart from it, they fall in the hands of ſeducing Hereticks, who make a prey of their ſouls, thirſting after, and rejoycing as much in the drawing of people away from Truth, as Robbers & Thieves do when they carry away the ſpoil of another mans goods; *leſt any man ſpoil you*; It is a metaphor taken from notorious thieves who carry away the ſtraying cattel. 2. Though Philoſophy, as it ſpeaketh the knowledge of truth found out by Natures light, and an accurate way for finding out the ſame, be not to be rejected, it being in all the parts of it a very uſefull help for attaining to the more exact knowledge of religious truths revealed in Scripture: and this ſame Apoſtle frequently making uſe of it in his accurate method, inſinuating proems, accurat and ſyllogiſtick

argumentations; and that often from common philoſophick principles, *Act.* 17. 28. yet if Philoſophy be taken for the errors of Philoſophers, and if thoſe be obtruded for truths; or, if it preſume to reject all religious truths, ſuch as the greateſt myſteries of chriſtian Religion, which are not concluſions grounded upon, and flowing from Natures light; or generally, when it is not kept as ſubſervient to Scripture, but preſumeth to lord it over them; Philoſophy ſo taken, and in thoſe caſes, is a very dangerous deceiver in the things of God, and ſo would be eſchewed: for, the Apoſtle doth not ſimply condemn Philoſophy, but the abuſe of it, even that which is deceiving and vain; *through Philoſophy and vain deceit.* 3. The traditious of men, whereby external rites without the authority of the written Word, are obtruded as worſhip to God upon the Church, having no other warrant but antiquity, cuſtom and humane authority, is the moſt vain and uſeleſſe doctrine which ever was taught, and no wayes to be ſubmitted unto; ſo this *vain deceit* is *after the traditions of men.* 4. The Moſaical Rites and Legal Ceremonies, as they were preſcribed by God unto the ancient Church, to be the firſt A. B. C, and eaſie Rudiments of Religion, fitted for the then infant-ſtate of the Church; ſo the binding power of them all (Chriſt the ſubſtance being come and ſuffered) doth ceaſe: yea, the practiſing of them now, the light of the Goſpel having clearly ſhined forth, is ſinfull, and to be eſchewed, as ſpeaking really, and by vertue of their firſt inſtitution, that Chriſt is not yet come in the fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 2. for, by theſe *Rudiments*, or, Elements of the world, of which he would have them to beware, is meant thoſe Legal Ceremonies, ſee *Gal.* 4 v. 3, 9. *After the Rudiments of the world.* 5. The way of Chriſt, and of men's own natural wiſdom, will not weld together ſo as to make up a perfect mixture: if it be their way, he will not own it for his: for, thoſe falſe Teachers did not quit Chriſt wholly, but would have joyned other things with him, and yet the Spirit of God calleth their way a deſerting of him; *And not after Chriſt*, ſaith he. Ver.

Verſ. 9. *For in him dwelleth all the fulneſſe of the God-head bodily.*

He refuteth all thoſe Impoſtors, firſt joyntly, becauſe Chriſt alone is moſt perfect, and by conſequence his doctrine alſo; as having God fully in his Eſſence and Attributes inſeperably reſiding in his Perſon, and this *bodily* or perſonally, the Divine Nature, having aſſumed the humane unto the unity of his Perſon; for, the word *Body*, is often taken for the Perſon, as 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. ſo that it were folly and impiety to ſeek ſalvation in any thing, but in Chriſt, and in the doctrine taught by him. *Doct.* 1. There is nothing more effectual for making us adhere to Chriſt and Truth, than the conſideration of that worth and fulneſſe which is in him; for, the Apoſtle holdeth out the fulneſſe of the Godhead in Chriſt, that they may not be drawn away from him: *for in him dwelleth, &c.* 2. The more a man doth exerciſe himſelf in ſpeaking or thinking of Chriſt, his heart and mouth will be the more enlarged upon that ſubject: for, this being the third time which the Apoſtle hath ſpoken of this fulneſſe, firſt, chap. 1. v. 19. next, chap. 2. v. 3. and now here, we find his ſpeech riſeth ſtill higher. 3. We learn hence ſeveral things of the Perſon and Natures of Chriſt; as firſt, that he is true man: for, the *Godhead dwelleth in* his humane Nature, as in his Temple. Secondly, he is alſo true God, and ſo the ſame God with the Father; for, the *fulneſs of the Godhead*, not a portion of God only, or the glorious effects of his power, or his particular gifts and graces, but his compleat eſſence *dwelleth in him*. Thirdly, That he is a diſtinct perſon from the Father, the whole Godhead being incarnat, not as abſolutely conſidered, but as it is in the Perſon of the Son: for, it is *in him*, to wit, in Chriſt, not in the Father, that the *Godhead dwelleth bodily*. Fourthly, Though there be two Natures in Chriſt; yet he is but one perſon: *for, the Godhead dwelleth in him bodily*, that is, perſonally, or by vertue of the perſonal

union. Fifthly, This union is inſeperable: for, *the Godhead dwelleth in him*, as in his fixed proper houſe. Sixthly, Notwithſtanding of this union, the two Natures remain diſtinct, as the inhabitant is diſtinct from the houſe wherein he dwelleth. Seventhly, That God doth hold out himſelf in the Perſon of Chriſt God-man, as in a glaſſe, to be taken up and tranſacted with by loſt ſinners: or, the drift of the purpoſe is to ſhow that the fulneſſe of the Godhead reſideth in him, ſo as that we may make uſe of that fulneſſe throughly for our ſalvation, and that there is no need of any thing to be added to him.

Verſ. 10. *And ye are compleat in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*

Here are other two arguments: Firſt, Chriſt is not only full in himſelf, but all who are in him by faith, are compleat through him, as having from him all things neceſſary for ſalvation. The ſecond argument is againſt the worſhipping of Angels in particular, which he refuteth from Chriſt's prerogative above the Angels, as being their Head and Lord, upholding and ruling them as his creatures, chap. 1. 17. and preſerving them in the ſtate of grace through vertue of his mediation, *Job*, 4. 18. and imploying them for the Churches good, *Heb.* 1. 14. and therefore they are but his ſervants, and the beſt of them but our fellow-ſervants, and therefore ought not to be worſhipped, *Rev.* 22. 8, 9. nor are they mediators betwixt God and us, that being an honour due to him only, who is their Head, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. *Doct.* 1. We are in our ſelves empty things, being deſtitute of every thing which might commend us to God: *in him we are compleat*, and ſo in our ſelves empty. 2. There is a fulneſſe in Chriſt to be communicated unto all, who being ſenſible of their own emptineſſe, do by faith lay hold upon him; *in whom we are compleat*: which *compleatneſs* conſiſteth in the enjoyment of ſufficiency of means for ſalvation preſcribed by him, *Heb.* 3. 2. and in the imputation of his moſt

moſt perfect righteouſneſſe, and in the begun renovation of our nature by the Spirit of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 1.30. which ſhal be ſtill upon the growing hand till grace be crowned with glory, *Eph.* 5. 27. 3. Though there be a compleat fulneſſe in Chriſt the Mediator from whence we may ſupply our emptineſſe; yet we cannot partake of that his fulneſſe, except we firſt be *in him*, and by faith be united to him: ſo, *in him we are compleat.* 4. The greateſt powers and moſt noble of creatures, being compared with Chriſt, are but in the rank of ſubjects and ſervants: *He is the head*, even *of principalities and powers.* 5. According to the different degree of excellency which is in Chriſt and the creature, we ought to eſteem highly of the one, and meanly of the other: thus *he is the head* even *of principalities and powers*: The ſcope whereof is to ſhew, that he ſhould have the honour which is due to him, and they are to be kept in their own place.

Verſ. 11. *In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, by the circumciſion of Chriſt.*

In this verſe, and the verſes following, he cleareth how we are compleat in him, and reaſoneth againſt the Moſaical Ceremonies, eſpecially Circumciſion, upon their obſervation whereof, they were tyed unto all the reſt, *Gal.* 5. 3. therefore he mainly oppugneth it. The argument is, Believers have in Chriſt the thing ſignified by that Ordinance, to wit, ſpiritual circumciſion in the heart, which conſiſteth in the putting off, by the power of Chriſts Spirit, that corrupt maſſe or body of manifold ſins flowing from our innate corruption or ſinful fleſh; ſo that there was no need of that carnall circumciſion by hands, in cutting off the fleſh of the foreskin: which is a good conſequence againſt the urgers of circumciſion under the new Teſtament, where theſe ſhadows (Chriſt the ſubſtance being come) are aboliſhed, eſpecially ſeeing they urged it upon this pretence, That the Gentiles could

could not be purified without it. *Doct.* 1. In every Sacrament, ſuch as Circumciſion once was, there is an outward ſign, which is given by Chriſt's Miniſters, and ſome inward grace ſignified by it, the author and worker whereof is only Chriſt himſelf; So there was the outward rite of Circumciſion by the hands of men, and the inward grace of mortification *without hands*; and *by the Circumciſion of Chriſt*, that is, by the inward power of the Spirit of Chriſt. 2. There is no ſaving grace enjoyed by Believers but what they have in Chriſt, to wit, as the fountain, *Joh.* 1. 16. as the procurer and purchaſer of all grace for us, *Rom.* 6. 6. and as the applier of his own purchaſe to us, *Act.* 5. 31. So, *in him we are circumciſed.* 3. As our manifold actual ſins do flow from the fountain of original corruption, frequently called *fleſh*, (*Rom.* 7. & 8.) So the whole bulk of ſin is fitly compared to a *body*, becauſe of the weight of guilt which is in it, *Rom.* 7. 24. and the ſoul is wholly compaſſed by it, as it is with our natural body, *Gen.* 6. 5. yea, and the whole members of the body are made inſtruments of it, *Rom.* 6. 19. Thus he ſaith, *The body of the ſins of the fleſh.* 4. They who are in Chriſt, muſt be about the work of putting off this body, ſetting againſt, not only ſome one ſin or other, but the whole maſſe and body of ſin; *putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh.* 5. This ſinful body is already put off and laid aſide in ſome ſenſe by real Believers, to wit, in its guilt, *Rom.* 8. 1. in its dominion and reign, *Rom.* 6. 14. in the Believers ſincere purpoſe and honeſt reſolution, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. as alſo in his hope, that one day it ſhall be put off wholly, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. So the Circumciſion which Believers already have in Chriſt, is deſigned *A putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh.*

Verſ. 12. *Buried with him in Baptiſm, wherein alſo you are riſen with* him *through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.*

He doth further enlarge the former reaſon, whereby he alſo

alſo pre-occupieth an objection againſt our compleatneſſe in Chriſt, by ſhewing we have in Chriſt, not only the thing ſignified, but alſo an external initiatory ſeal, to wit, Baptiſm in the place of Circumciſion now aboliſhed; the fruits of which ſeal are mortification of ſin, and vivification in grace, by vertue of the death & reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, being laid hold on by faith, which is wrought in us by the mighty power of God; ſo that there was no place left for Circumciſion. *Doct.* 1. The Sacrament of Baptiſm under the new Teſtament ſucceedeth to Circumciſion under the old, and is to be adminiſtred to Children born within the viſible Church, as Circumciſion was to Infants of eight dayes age then, *Gen.* 17. 12. for, not only both do ſeal the ſame Covenant of grace, and are initiatory ſeals of it, but alſo *Paul* ſheweth that the Chriſtian Church is as compleat now in Chriſt, as the Jewiſh Church was, though we want Circumciſion, becauſe we have an Ordinance as good as it was, to wit, Baptiſm: Now if Baptiſm did not belong to Infants, we ſhould not yet be ſo compleat as they were, ſeeing the Covenant was ſealed by Circumciſion both to themſelves and their little ones: *Buried with him in Baptiſm.* 2. Regeneration conſiſts of two parts, to wit, firſt, Mortification of ſin, which ought to be a through and conſtant work, here ſet forth by our *being buried*, which ſpeaketh more than death: And ſecondly, Vivification, or quickning in grace, ſet forth by *our riſing again.* *Doct.* 3. Both thoſe parts of Regeneration are ſealed in Baptiſm, not as if we were of neceſſity to ſuppone that thoſe are already in the perſon to be baptized, but becauſe Baptiſm obligeth the baptized perſon to ſet about theſe, and ſealeth up the whole Promiſes on Gods part, even thoſe which are for ſanctification and grace; ſo that whenever the party baptized ſhall lay hold by faith upon the Promiſe, he hath God engaged by word and ſeal, to make it out; thus Circumciſion was a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, *Rom.* 4. 11. and yet it was not to be ſupponed that every Child of eight dayes age had actual faith: *Buried with*

him

him in Baptiſm, wherein ye are alſo riſen. 4. Though the Sacraments do ſeal up grace to us in the way preſently mentioned; yet they do not confer grace upon us by any proper vertue of their own, nor yet is there any principle of power in us which can reach the effectuating of ſuch a work, *Eph.* 2. 1. although the Sacraments do ſtrongly tie us to the working of it, as ſaid is: It is only the death, burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt, which is the fountain-cauſe of our dying to ſin and living to God, in ſo far as by the merit, efficacy and example of the former we attain unto the latter; in which reſpect we are ſaid *to be buried with him, and riſen with him.* 5. It is no leſſe than the infinit power of God which worketh faith in us, and neither Sacraments, nor the Death or Life of Chriſt will avail to the ſubduing of ſin, and quickning of grace, except Jeſus Chriſt be laid hold upon by faith: *We are buried with him by faith,* and *faith is the operation of God.* 6. In our acting of faith in God, we are not to lay hold upon him in a general confuſed notion, but ſhould eye that in God moſt, which is moſt conducing unto that purpoſe for which we do imploy him: Thus, ſpeaking of faith, as it imployeth God for quickning in grace, he caſteth an eye to that work of God, whereupon our quickning in grace dependeth moſt, even *his raiſing of Chriſt from the dead.*

Verſ. 13. *And you being dead in your ſins, and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all treſpaſſes.*

He giveth a further reaſon againſt the neceſſity of circumciſion, to wit, when they were dead in ſin, and without circumciſion, as being Gentiles, ſee *Eph.* 2. 11. God had quickened them with Chriſt, making them partake of the life of grace, purchaſed by him here, and giving them right to the life of glory hereafter, having pardoned all their ſins freely for his ſake. So, there was no neceſſity, but rather it would be impiety to return unto Circum-

cumciſion now, eſpecially ſeeing it was urged by the falſe Apoſtles, as a neceſſary mean to get their natures purified, and their ſins pardoned. *Doct.* 1. Every man by nature, through ſin is in a ſtate of death, he is thereby ſpiritually dead, as being deprived of all grace, union and communion with God, (chap. 1. 21.) he is alſo judicially dead, as lying under the ſentence of death, pronounced by the Covenant of Works, *Gen.* 2. 17. *And you being dead in your ſins.* 2. As this ſtate of death doth totally diſable us from quickening our ſelves, it is onely God who quickeneth: ſo, no miſery of the creature, though never ſo comprehenſive, as extending it ſelf both to our outward and inward ſtate; though never ſo deſperate, as being paſt all remedie by humane help, will impede God from doing good, and beſtowing of the choiceſt good. Thus, though they were miſerable for their inward ſtate, as *being dead*, and ſo incurable by humane Art; and for their outward ſtate, as being in the *uncircumciſion of their fleſh*, or, uncircumciſed Gentiles, yet *God doth quicken them.* 3. Whenever a man believeth in Chriſt, he is in the ſame moment of time united to Chriſt, and ſo, that all which he did or ſuffered, as ſuſtaining our perſon, or, which he procured for our behoof, as being our Head, whether in his death, buriall, or reſurrection, is imputed to us by God, and a right unto them derived to us, as if we had been perſonally preſent with him all thoſe times, and given our conſent to his doing of all thoſe things in our name, and for our behalf: hence is it that He is ſaid to have *quickened theſe Coloſſians together with him*, though Chriſt had riſen from the dead, ſome years before their coverſion. 4. There is no ſpirituall life attainable, except our obligation to wrath by the pardon of ſin, be removed; *you hath he quickened, having forgiven you all your treſpaſſes.* 5. This pardon, though dearly purchaſed by Chriſt, *Matth.* 26. 28. yet it is freely beſtowed upon us; *having forgiven you*, the word ſignifies, *freely forgiven*, as coming from a root which ſignifies grace. 6. Pardon of ſin is alſo univerſall,

verſall, as leaving no ſin unpardoned to him who doth believe and repent, *Pſal.* 32. 5. *having forgiven you all treſpaſſes.*

Verſ. 14. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his croſſe:*

The Apoſtle illuſtrates the benefit of pardon, and bringeth an argument againſt the Ceremoniall Law in generall, by ſhewing, God had not onely forgiven the debt of ſin, but Chriſt alſo by his death, had deſtroyed their obligation to wrath, becauſe of ſin, making it altogether uſeleſſe, ever to give faith in Law againſt them; which obligation he calleth, *the hand-writing of ordinances which was contrary to us*; alluding to written obligations among men, for ſums of money, or ſuch like, wherein there is the body of the Writ, and the Debtors ſubſcription: anſwerable to which, there is in this *hand-writing*; Firſt, the obligation it ſelf, to wit, the Covenant of works, and condemning power of the Law, *Gal.* 3.10. Secondly, our aſſent and ſubſcription to this obligation, which is the ſentence of every man's conſcience againſt himſelf, whether of Jew or Gentile, whereby he aſſents to the equity of that curſe which the Law pronounceth, *Rom.* 2.15. But particularly, and over and above to the Jews, this ſubſcription was the practice of the Ceremoniall Law, which being ſeparated from Chriſt, and looked upon as ſervice acceptable to God in it ſelf, as it was gone about by many of the Jews before Chriſt came, and ſo urged by the falſe Apoſtles upon the Gentiles; the practice (I ſay) of the Ceremoniall Law ſo conſidered, was nothing elſe but a publick teſtification of their own guilt: for example, by killing a beaſt was teſtified, that they deſerved to die themſelves; and ſeeing the diſpute is in this place againſt the Ceremoniall Law, this *hand-writing in ordinances*, is to be taken mainly in this ſenſe, although we are not to exclude the

the former: now the argument concludeth ſtrongly, that ſeeing the debt is payed, the obligation cancelled, it were madneſſe and impietie to renew it again, as thoſe did, who practized the Legall ceremonies. *Doct.* 1. There is an obligation above the head of every man, through vertue of the curſe of the Law, binding him over to under-ly eternal wrath for ſin, aſſented unto, and as it were ſubſcribed by the voice of every man's conſcience, and by the practice of the Ceremoniall Law unto the Jews: for, this is *the hand-writing of ordinances* here ſpoken of. 2. This obligation muſt be cancelled, and ſo the condemning power of the Law abrogate, before ſin be pardoned, and our right to Heaven obtained: for, with reſpect to the impeding of thoſe, it is ſaid *to have been againſt us, and contrary unto us.* 3. None but Chriſt could deſtroy this *hand-writing*; becauſe none other was able to ſatiſfie the ſum contained in it. *Heb.* 10. 9. for, he ſpeaks of Chriſt, while he ſaith, *blotting out the hand-writing in ordinances.* 4. It ſtood Chriſt no leſſe than his life, to get this bond deſtroyed; for, he behooved to pay the ſum, before the condemning power of the Law could ceaſe, *Joh.* 3. 16. and to produce the ſubſtance, before thoſe Legall ſhadows could evaniſh, *Heb.* 9. 12. both which required his death; ſo he is ſaid to *nail it to his croſſe.* 5. It is a matter of no ſmall difficulty, to get the conſcience of wakened ſinners quieted, and their hearts perſwaded, that their obligation to wrath, becauſe of ſin, is removed; therefore the Spirit of God uſeth ſo many expreſſions to aſſure their heart in this matter; *the hand-writing is blotted out*, as it were croſſe-ſtrokes are drawn through it; but, leſt the heart ſuſpect it may be yet legible, therefore he addeth, it is removed and *taken out of the way*; but, leſt haply it ſhould be again found and produced, he addeth yet, it is torn, deſtroyed, and *nailed to the croſſe*, and ſo made fully uſeleſſe ever to witneſſe any thing againſt the Believer. 6. Though Chriſt did compleat this ſum contained within this hand-writing, while he was hanging on the croſſe, ſo as the Father's

juſtice

juſtice had no more to ſeek of Chriſt the Cautioner, *Joh.* 19.30. in which ſenſe, he did even then meritoriouſly deſtroy this hand-writing, yet the obligation ſtandeth ſtill in force againſt the ſinner, till he enter himſelf Heir by faith unto Chriſt's obedience and death; for, this was the order agreed upon betwixt the Father and the Son according to which, the fruits of his death were to be applyed, to wit, by faith, *Joh.*3.16. So, it is clear from Verſe 13. thoſe Coloſſians were dead in their ſins before their renovation, which was long after Chriſt's death.

Verſ. 15. *And having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

He inlargeth the preſent argument thus, that Chriſt by deſtroying that hand-writing, hath ſpoiled, diſgraced, and triumphed over all our ſpirituall enemies, eſpecially Satan the great Generall, and his whole Army of ſins, temptations, death and hell which fighteth under his banner, and this even by his ſufferings; wherein he alludeth to the ancient cuſtome of Conquerors, who did diſ-arm their captives, having joyned them by two, or moe, in chains, made them march before, to their publick ſhame and diſgrace, they themſelves coming after in their triumphing chariot; ſo did Chriſt: *having ſpoiled principalities and powers, made a ſhew of them, &c.* *Doct.* 1. The power of Devils is very great, as being ſpirituall ſubſtances, ſtrong and mighty Angels, *Jude* v.6. having the world and ſin under them, as their ſubjects, *Eph.*2.2. Thus from their power they are called *principalities and powers.* 2. This great power of theirs is wholly imployed to oppoſe the work of man's ſalvation; for, they are ſpoken of here as oppoſits. 3. Satans power over ſouls, doth flow from the ſentence of condemnation pronounced by the Law againſt ſinners, and conſiſts in that dominion which ſin hath obtained over them: for, upon the blotting out of that handwriting, he was ſpoiled of his power,

power, as appeareth from the connexion. 4. Jeſus Chriſt having ſatisfied the Fathers juſtice, and thereby not only enervated the Law's condemnatory ſentence, v. 14. but alſo obtained from the Father, That ſin ſhould no more have dominion over the redeemed ones, *Rom.* 6. 14. he hath ſpoiled the Devil of that great power which once he had; ſo that, though he can, and doth tempt Believers, yet he cannot overcome them; though he hold them in exerciſe, he cannot mar their ſalvation, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. he may bruiſe their heel, but cannot break their head: Thus with Chriſt's blotting out the hand-writing, is conjoyned *his having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers.* 5. Chriſt doth bring about his moſt gracious works in a way which ſeemeth moſt unlikely to carnall ſenſe: ſo that no eye, but that of faith, can take him up: what other eye could take up Chriſt as doing all this upon the croſſe? when the Jews and Roman ſouldiers were ſpoiling him, and parting his garments, that he, even then, and by being ſpoiled, was ſpoiling principalities and powers; when they were putting him to ſhame and diſgrace, that he, even then, was making a ſhew of Satan openly, and was rubbing diſgrace upon him, overcoming him with his own armour; and when they were triumphing and inſulting over him, that even then, he was triumphing over all the Devils in hell, as having by his death given the dead blow to their power and kingdom, and ſo overcame them, by ſuffering himſelf to be overcome by them; *triumphing over them in it*; to wit, in his croſſe. 6. How dear ſoever the work of our ſalvation did ſtand to Chriſt, it was matter of no ſmall joy unto him to have it throughed, and thoſe who were enemies to it deſtroyed: for, while he is bleeding, and racked with pain upon the croſſe, he is yet rejoycing and triumphing, and that becauſe this work was thriving: *he triumphed over them in it*; the croſſe was as a chariot of triumph to him.

Verſ. 16. *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the ſabbath* dayes:

He draweth a concluſion from the former arguments: That ſeeing the Ceremoniall Law was now aboliſhed, therefore none ſhould take upon them to judge or condemn others for the not obſerving any of theſe Ceremonies; or, if any would be ſo preſumptuous, the people of God ſhould not regard their injunctions or cenſures: and of thoſe ceremoniall obſervances, he giveth two inſtances; the one relating to that difference to be kept among Meats, according to *Numb. 6. 3.* the other relating to that difference obſerved in Dayes: Dayes obſerved among the Jews were chiefly of three ſorts; Firſt, anniverſary, that returned every year, here deſigned by the generall name of *an holy day*. Secondly, Lunary, or monethly, which returned every moneth, as the firſt day of every *new moon*. Thirdly, weekly, which returned every week, and on the ſeventh day of the week: all which are now abrogated, even the Jewiſh ſeventh day Sabbath; and the Lord's day, or, the Chriſtian firſt-dayes Sabbath, ſubſtitute in its place, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. *Doct.* 1. What ever Chriſt hath purchaſed by his death, ought to be ſtood to, and made uſe of: for, upon the abolition of the ceremoniall Law by Chriſt's death, he infereth, *Let no man therefore judge you.* 2. Chriſt the Lord hath given no ſuch power unto any, to make that a part of worſhip, binding the conſcience, which he hath not commanded; *Let no man judge you.* It relateth to the falſe Apoſtles, that they ſhould not injoyn. 3. When men preſume to preſcribe laws binding mens conſcience, we are not to obey what they injoyn, or regard much what they judge of, or inflict upon us for diſobedience: *let no man judge you.* It relateth alſo to the people that they ſhould not obey ſuch injunctions. 4. There is an abſtinence from meats politick, which the Magiſtrate injoyneth

joyneth for civill ends; there is an abſtinence medicinal, which Phyſicians preſcribe for preſervation or recovery of health; and an abſtinence Eccleſiaſticall, when God by his providence, and voice of his Church, calleth his people to faſting and mourning: all thoſe ſorts of abſtinence are lawfull; but to abſtain from meat upon pretence of holineſſe and conſcience, as if ſome meats were unclean, or leſſe holy in their own nature than others, 1 *Tim.* 4. 4. or, as if ſimple abſtinence at any time were a thing acceptable to God in it ſelf, without reſpect had to the end for which it is injoyned, *Iſa.* 58. 5. This is ſinfull and unlawfull; *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink.* 5. Though the firſt day of the week is conſtantly to be ſanctified by all the Chriſtian Churches, and that by vertue of a divine command, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. Chriſt's example, *Joh.* 20. 19. and Apoſtolick practice, *Acts* 20. 7. and other dayes alſo, or parts of dayes are to be ſanctified, when God, by his more than ordinary judgements or mercies, doth occaſionally call to humiliation or thankſgiving, *Mark* 2. 20. Yet not onely is the keeping of the Jewiſh ſet Feaſts and Faſts ſinfull, but by more than paritie of reaſon, the ſetting apart of dayes to the honour of Saints and Angels, the keeping holy of any day not appointed by God, for ſome ſuppoſed ſanctitie in that day more than in another; or, as if ſimple abſtinence from work, were in it ſelf acceptable to God, is alſo unlawfull; Yea, the dedicating of fixed anniverſary dayes, whether for humiliation or thankſgiving, ſo as not to take that day again for worldly imployments, if God by his providence did call us to it; or, if by change of diſpenſation he call us unto an exerciſe contrary unto that, for which the day is ſet apart: ſuch dedication of dayes is alſo unwarrantable, as having no example in the Church of the Old Teſtament, nor yet from the practice of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and hath in it ſome kind of limiting of the Almighty, to make the courſe of his providence to anſwer our appointed times; *Let none judge you in reſpect of*

a holy day. 6. Chriſtians in the point of obedience to God, and of not ſubjecting their conſciences to the will of men, ought to be very preciſe; *In reſpect of a holy day*: in the Originall it is, *in the part of a holy day*; the falſe Apoſtles, it ſeemeth, urged to ſanctifie a part of thoſe dayes at leaſt, if not the whole; but *Paul* will not have them yeelding, no not to a part.

Verſ. 17. *Which are a ſhadow of things to come, but the body is of Chriſt.*

He ſtrengtheneth the concluſion by an additionall argument, the meaning whereof is: thoſe Legall Ceremonies were but dark ſhadows of things to come, to remain onely untill Chriſt, who is the truth, body and ſubſtance of them ſhould come; ſo that to obſerve them under the Goſpel, were in effect to ſay, that Chriſt the Body is not yet come. *Doct.* 1. Though ſome of thoſe Legall Ceremonies were commemorative of things paſt, *Exod.* 13.8. yet the main uſe of them all, was, to lead the Church which then was, to the conſideration of things to come, to wit, Chriſt, grace, and the doctrine of the Goſpel: ſo by the difference of meats was ſignified, that the Jews were a diſtinct people from all other Nations, *Acts* 10. 11. 23. which diſtinction was to be taken away by Chriſt; their Feſtivall dayes, as the Paſſeover, did ſhadow forth our ſpirituall delivery by Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. and the Sabbath, our eternall reſt, &c. *which are ſhadows of things to come.* 2. The knowledge which the ancient Church had of Chriſt, was but very dark and confuſed, being compared with ours, ſuch as the deſignation of a Body by its ſhadow, they had but *ſhadows of things to come.* 3. How much vertue muſt there be in Chriſt, whoſe very ſhadow, ſome obſcure and confuſed notions of him, did afford abundant life and comfort unto all ſuch as were then ſaved: for, all that they injoyed, was but *ſhadows of things to come.* 4. Whatever good was hid under thoſe Legall ſhadows, we have it all fulfilled and

and made manifeſt in Chriſt and the Goſpel: ſome of them ſhadowed forth moral ſanctity, and this Chriſt hath clearly taught, and in his own perſon fulfilled; ſome pointed at the expiation of ſin, and this Chriſt by his life and death hath merited; ſome did preſignifie eternal life, and the participation of it by real Believers, and this Chriſt in the Goſpel hath clearly unfolded; ſo the *Body is of Chriſt.*

Verſ. 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of Angels, intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen, vainly puft up by his fleſhly mind.*

He reaſoneth now againſt the firſt ſort of Impoſtors, mentioned ver. 8. to wit, abuſed Philoſophy, whereby they did preſſe the worſhipping of Angels, which he dehorteth from, becauſe thoſe Hereticks did uſurp the place of Judges, to preſcribe in the matter of worſhip, thereby making Chriſtians loſe their reward of Heaven, by departing out of the way which leadeth to it; and becauſe they did cover their heretical ſpirits, and damnable error of Angel-worſhip by a ſhew of humility and arguments drawn from it, and did determine boldly in thoſe things whereof they were wholly ignorant; and becauſe they were puffed up with arrogance and pride, ariſing from the gifts of their fleſhly and corrupt mind. *Doct.* 1. Error and Idolatry, eſpecially in Gods worſhip, is a fearfull ſin, depriving thoſe who are bewitched with it of the reward of Heaven and happineſſe: for, the preſſers of Angel-worſhip did *beguile them of their reward.* 2. Such is the mad zeal of thoſe who are the patrons of Idolatry, as to preſſe their idolatrous opinions and practices with ſo much authority upon the conſciences of people, as to adjudge them to condemnation if they receive them not; *let no man deceive you of your reward:* the word ſignifieth *let no man play the Judge over you, defrauding you of your reward,* and is taken from the unjuſt dealing of Judges and

Umpiers in Races, who would by their authority preſſe men to run out of the way, as they would not loſe the prize, and in the mean time make them loſe. 3. It hath been, and yet is very uſuall for vileſt Hereticks to cover themſelves with a more than ordinary ſhew of humility and ſelf-denial in the whole ſtrain of their carriage; that ſo they may deceive the ſimple, *Rom.* 16. 18. Thoſe Hereticks did lurk under *voluntary humility*. 4. The more of ſelf-denial men of erring ſpirits do pretend to, they are the more dangerous, and the more to be eſchewed; ſo did the Apoſtle enjoyn the Coloſſians to beware of theſe Hereticks, ſo much the more as they pretended to a *voluntary humility*. 5. Though a duty, or vertue, were never ſo good in it ſelf; yet when men do place it in thoſe things, wherein God doth not, it is a ſin; for they made worſhipping of Angels to be humility, pretending it were preſumption to go to God at the neareſt, without the mediation of thoſe bleſſed and glorious creatures: and it was *voluntary*; a humility of their own invention, and therefore God makes it a part of their wickedneſſe. 6. Though we are to give civil worſhip to men in place and authority, or who excel in gifts and graces, *Exod.* 20. 12. which ought to be given alſo to glorified Saints and Angels, in ſo far as to think reverently of them, to bleſſe God for his goodneſſe to them, and the good which he doth unto us by them, and to long to be in that ſtate of happineſſe which they enjoy; yet religious worſhip, as importing the ſubjection of our minds and conſciences unto that which we worſhip, belongeth only unto God, *Deut.* 6. 13. and to give it as the Papiſts do, unto any creature, whether Saint or Angel, is no leſſe than groſſe Idolatry: for, it is condemned here: *And the worſhipping of Angels*. 7. Nothing ought to be received for a part of worſhip, and much leſſe to be preſſed by us upon others as ſuch, the conſonance whereof with the mind of God is not fully known and throughly underſtood; ſo they are condemned for preſſing thoſe things on others, which they did not underſtand themſelves; *intruding in-*

to

to those things which they had not seen. 8. It is the nature of Hereticks to be most bold and peremptory in those things whereof they understood least: boldnesse, confidence and ignorance, are the usual companions of Heresie, *Jude* 10. So *they intruded into those things which they had not seen*; it is a word taken from the bold and lofty going of those who acted the persons of Kings in Stage-playes. 9. As pride and self-conceit are the usual attendants of Heresie; so there is often much of pride and self-seeking, where folk pretend to more than ordinary self-denyal and humility: Vice is then arrived at the highest degree, when it seeketh to vail it self under the pretence of the contrary vertue, *Isa.* 66. 5. So those Hereticks, who pretended much to humility, were *puffed up with their fleshlie mind.* 10. The mind of man is wholly corrupt and fleshly, and cannot but miscarry when it taketh upon it to judge and command in the things of God, according to the principles of natures light; hence he calleth the mind *fleshlie*, or corrupt, with relation to divine worship. 11. There is nothing by which a man will be more readily puffed up than the inward gifts of the mind, if they be not sanctified, such as wit, knowledge, eloquence, memory, &c. hence he maketh their *puffing up* to flow from the mind; *vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*

Vers. 19. *And not holding the head, from which all the body by joynts and bands having nourishment ministred, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*

Here is another argument against the worshippers of Angels, in that they impare the honour of Christ, as head of his Church; making Angels to share with him in it, while-as they imployed them as Mediators with God to obtain grace and salvation, when Christ alone doth discharge the office of an Head compleatly, from whom the whole Body of the universal Church, being knit to him the Head, and one to another by the Nerves

and Sinnews of one common Spirit, doth receive ſpiritual nouriſhment and increaſe in the graces of Gods Spirit. *Doct.* 1. So jealous is Chriſt in the matter of his own glory, that he will not ſuffer any other to ſhare with him in it: if Saints, Angels, Pope, or any other be made uſe of as conjunct collegues with, and helpers of Chriſt in his Mediatory office, he ceaſeth to be a Mediator at all unto thoſe who ſo do; thus will they give but a ſhare of the honour due unto Chriſt, as Head, to the Angels: they are ſaid *not to hold the head*, or to be ſeparated from the head and the vertue which floweth from it. 2. What ever relation is taken on by Chriſt towards his Church, whether of King, Head, Husband, Brother, Friend, or any other, he will be really forth-coming according to all which that relation doth import; So, as Head, he doth all that which the head doth to the natural body: he furniſheth us with life, motion, ſpiritual nerves, arteries, &c. *from whom the whole body, &c.* 3. That ſufficient influence for grace, and ſpiritual nouriſhment may be conveyed from Chriſt the head, to ſinners, it is neceſſary that they be unite and knit to him, to wit, by the Spirit of Chriſt, *Phil.* 3. 12. and the grace of faith, *Eph.* 3. 17. for, thoſe are the *joynts and bands*, by which this *nouriſhment is miniſtred*; he ſpeaks with an alluſion to the nerves and arteries of the natural body, whereby it is knit to the head, and hath life and motion conveyed unto it. 4. There is a band of Chriſtian love wrought by the Spirit of God, by which all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body are knit together: for, Love is the band by which they are *knit together*, chap. 3. 14. *Doct.* 5. The more of ſpiritual influence Believers do draw from Chriſt, they will band the better among themſelves; for, their being knit together by joynts and bands, as the members of the natural body by their reſpective ligaments, doth depend upon their receiving of nouriſhment from the head; *from whom the body having nouriſhment miniſtred, and knit together.* 6. Growth and increaſe is required in the members of Chriſt's body; and an in-

creaſe,

creaſe, not in pride and conceit of gifts, but in knowledge, humility, faith, patience, and other graces (2 *Pet.* 1. 5.) which come from God. This is to *increaſe with the increaſe of God*, that is, which cometh from God. 7. This Chriſtian increaſe and divine growth, is attained unto by keeping ſtrict union with Chriſt, and communion with his Members: for, their increaſing with the increaſe of God, ſupponeth *nouriſhment miniſtred from the Head*, and themſelves *knit together by joynts and bands.*

Verſ. 20. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world: why, as though living in the world, are ye ſubject to ordinances?*

21. *(Touch not, taſte not, handle not:*

He reaſoneth now againſt the third ſort of Impoſtors, mentioned v. 8. to wit, ridiculous and ſuperſtitious rites and opinions in worſhip and doctrine. He proponed thoſe Impoſtors, v. 8. in that order, wherein they did break up firſt in the world; but in the refutation he altereth the method, medling with that firſt which had moſt of ſeeming reaſon for it. His firſt argument againſt this head, is to this purpoſe, That ſeeing, as he hath already proven, they were freed from the Leviticall Ordinances, (called *rudiments of the world*: ſee v. 8.) which were inſtituted by God himſelf, by what pretext of reaſon could they ſubmit to ſuperſtitious rites, appointed by men? as if they were living in the world, that is, ſubjected in their conſciences to the dictates of men v. 20. Of which ordinances he giveth one inſtance in the matter of meats, and ſpeaketh in the perſon of ſome one of thoſe ſuperſtitious Rabbies, diſcharging the people to *touch*, or rather for eſchewing tautologie, and as the word doth alſo ſignifie, *to eat a little* of ſuch a meat; then, *to taſte it*; laſtly, *to handle it*, v. 21. *Doct.* 1. Through vertue of Chriſt's under-taking to die for believers, and the Father's acceptation of his death for them, it followeth, that all thoſe benefits which were purchaſed by his death, do as much belon

belong unto them upon their laying hold upon him by faith, as if they themſelves had died; Yea, as to this effect they are reckoned to have died with him: thus they were *dead with Chriſt* to thoſe ceremonies, and ſo they had no more power over them, than the Laws of men have over thoſe who are dead: becauſe Chriſt having by his death fulfilled what was typified by them, and ſo purchaſed freedome to his people from that yoke, they had as much right to that purchaſed freedome, as if themſelves had died for it; *if ye be therefore dead with Chriſt, &c.* 2. Our being freed from the tye of the Ceremoniall Law and ordinances thereof, though appointed by God, doth much more liberate us from the yoke of ſignificant rites and religious ceremonies, which are onely inſtituted by men: he did not abrogate his own Ceremonies, that men might appoint theirs: and as it is ſinfull for men to injoyn ſuch; ſo it is no leſſe ſinfull, and a very betraying of that liberty which Chriſt hath purchaſed, *Gal.* 5. 1. to give obedience to any ſuch injunctions: for, he reaſoneth from the aboliſhing of the ceremoniall Law, to our not-ſubjecting of our ſelves to any ordinance of that kind: *if ye be therefore dead, why are ye ſubject to ordinances?* 3. The authors of ſuperſtition are very diligent to have their ſuperſtitious fooleries punctually practiſed, and their commands for that end exactly obeyed. Thus he brings in the Maſters of ſuperſtition delivering their injunctions, as it were to every man in particular: *touch not*, in the ſingular number. 4. There is no end of ſuperſtitious injunctions, when once given way to: they do both multiply and grow alſo more ſtrict; ſo here, firſt, they forbid them *to eat*; ſecondly, *to taſte*; thirdly, not ſo much as *to handle*. 5. Satan uſeth moſt frequently to lay ſnares and gins in thoſe things whereof men have moſt frequent uſe, eſpecially in our meat and drink: he driveth ſome to ſin in thoſe by exceſſe, *Iſa.* 5. 11. Others by placing Religion in ſimple abſtinence from them, under pretence of a more than ordinary mortification; So did theſe Do-

Doctors who commanded, *eat not, taſte not, handle not.*

Verſ. 22. *Which all are to periſh with the uſing) after the commandements and doctrines of men.*

He addeth two other arguments againſt thoſe ſuperſtitious rites, eſpecially the placing of Religion in abſtinence from meats; Firſt, they are appointed for the uſe of man, and periſh in the uſing, 1 *Cor.* 6.13. Secondly, all ſuch ordinances are but traditions of men, *Matth.* 15.9. *Doct.* 1. We ſhould uſe all things for that end for which God hath appointed them: Religion is not to be placed in thoſe things which God hath only deſtinated for a naturall or civill uſe, as the wearing of ſuch an habit, abſtinence from ſuch and ſuch meats: for, the Apoſtle reaſoneth againſt the placing of Religion in meats, becauſe they are appointed onely for a naturall uſe; *which all are to periſh with the uſing.* 2. This doth not militate againſt the religious uſe of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament: for, God hath appointed thoſe Elements to be ſo uſed: and the two arguments in this verſe are to be taken jointly, that no humane authority can injoyn the uſe of, or abſtinence from, ſuch a ſort of meat, as a part of religious worſhip; *which all are to periſh with the uſing, after the doctrines of men.* 3. Though Church-Judicatories have power to determine time, place, and other circumſtances of worſhip, which are common to religious and civill actions, and are left undetermined by the Word, as being almoſt infinite, and often changeable upon ſeverall occaſions, 1 *Cor.* 14. 40. Yet the Lord hath given no ſuch power unto men, whether the Civill Magiſtrate, Church guides, or any other, to injoyn any thing as ſervice to God in it ſelf, which he hath not appointed; nor yet to command any thing to be gone about as a religious ceremony, or ſignificant rite in his worſhip: all ſuch ceremonies were expreſſely preſcribed by God under the Old Teſtament, ſo that it was not lawfull to adde

any

anything unto what was commanded them, *Deut.* 12. 32. and the rule of worſhip muſt be no leſſe compleat under the New Teſtament, *Heb.* 3. 2. and 5. 6. So, thoſe rites were to be rejected for this ſame very cauſe, they were *the commandments and doctrines of men.*

Verſ. 23. *Which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſedome in will-worſhip and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the ſatisfying of the fleſh.*

He mentioneth three fair pretences, whereof uſe was made to plead for, and commend thoſe ſuperſtitious rites; Firſt, they were *will-worſhip*; a giving of more to God than he required. Secondly, the practiſing of them, was an evidence of peoples humility, in their ſubmiſſive obedience to the injunctions of ſuperiours. Thirdly, their voluntary and exceſſive abſtinence from meat, ſleep, and their other laborious bodily exerciſes, did tend to mortification, and was a part of mortification, in *neglecting of the body*, which the moſt part of men ſtrive ſo much to pamper: all which the Apoſtle, having ſpoken ſufficiently to this purpoſe already, doth refute in one word, to wit, that they had onely a ſhew or pretext, but no ſoliditie of reaſon or wiſedome in them; and addeth another reaſon againſt the practice of thoſe rites, becauſe thereby they withheld that honor or juſt care: (ſee 1. *Tim.* 5. 3.) from the body, which ought to be had in the ſatisfying the neceſſities thereof. *Doct.* 1. There is no error, the maintainers whereof have not ſomwhat to ſay in its defence, whereby they labour to extoll it as moſt heavenly and excellent; Thus the doctrine of thoſe ſuperſtitious rites pretended to *wiſedome*, that is, heavenly and excellent doctrine. 2. All that can be ſaid for any error, being rightly weighed, will be found but meer pretexts, fair ſhews, and no ſoliditie of reaſon; *they had* but *a ſhew of wiſedome.* 3. As men do like well to ſerve God with their own inventions, thinking they do thereby give unto God his whole due, and ſomwhat more:

So

So God will acknowledge nothing for ſervice done to him, but what himſelf hath required; he approveth willing worſhip, but not *will-worſhip*; for, it is here rejected, notwithſtanding the fair ſhew of wiſedome which is in it. 4. For men to give blinde obedience unto the commands of Superiors, though it pretend to humility and devout ſubmiſſion of mind; yet it is not reall humility, but a proſtituting of our ſouls and conſciences to the wills of men; So this *humility* or ſubmiſſive diſpoſition, which was their ſecond pretence, hath but a *ſhew of wiſedome* in it, and is not reall. 5. Though watchings, faſtings, and other bodily exerciſes are profitable, and may be lawfully uſed, if they be referred to the right end for bringing the body in ſubjection, 1 *Cor.* 4. 27. leſt through too much ſatietie it take looſe reins to ſin; and that hereby we may be helped to call on God more ardently, *Joel* 1. 14. providing there be due moderation in uſing of them, *Joſh.* 7. 10. Yet the exceſſive and immoderate uſe of thoſe, diſabling the body from being ſerviceable to the ſpirit, and the placing of worſhip in them, being conſidered in themſelves, and without relation to the fore-mentioned ends: The neglecting of the body thus, though it hath a ſhew of reaſon for it, yet it hath no more but a ſhew or pretext, and is a reall ſin before God: *which things have a ſhew of wiſedome, neglecting the body.* 5. As there is an exceſſive pampering of the fleſh, which is ſinfull, and forbidden, when proviſion is made for it to fulfill the luſts thereof, *Rom.* 13. 14. So there is a lawfull and neceſſary care of the fleſh or body, whereby things neceſſary for food and raiment are provided for and beſtowed upon it, in ſo far, that ſtrength and health be not in-lacking for diſchargeing the duties of our calling: and they who deny this care and honour to it, though even upon a religious pretence, do ſin againſt God; ſo he condemneth thoſe ſuperſtitious rites in this, that many of them did carry with them the neglect of this care; *not in any honour to the ſatisfying of the fleſh.*

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THe Apostle (having asserted the truth of the Gospel, and refuted some contrary errors) exhorteth them next unto suitable practice. And in the first part of this Chapter, he presseth upon them generall duties belonging to all conditions of men.

And first, he exhorteth unto all those duties, in the bulk, under the name of seeking Heaven, and things heavenly, and of neglecting things on earth. First, because of Christ's being there in great state, v. 1, 2. And secondly, because they were dead to sin, and things under Heaven. And thirdly, though their spirituall life was now hid, v. 3. yet it should kyth afterwards, v. 4. Next he presseth those generall duties in two particular branches; as first, mortification, reckoning forth severall sins to be mortified; first, more carnall corruptions, v. 5. and arguments are used, v. 6, 7. Secondly, more spirituall corruptions, v. 8, 9.-- by an argument taken from their regeneration, v.--9, 10. Which he cleareth by removing those things which have no influence upon regeneration, v. 11. Next he presseth vivification, and the exercise of severall vertues; whereof he giveth some examples, intermingling diverse arguments, to v. 16. where he inciteth to the study of Scripture, and giveth a generall rule for all our actions, v. 17.

In the second part, he presseth some duties belonging to Christians, as they are members of Families: First, the duties of wives, v. 18. Secondly, of husbands, v. 19. Thirdly, of children, v. 20. Fourthly, of fathers, v. 21. Fifthly, of servants, v. 22, 23, which are inforced by a promise, v. 24. and a threatning, v. 25.

Ver.

Verſ. 1. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God.*

2. *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

He exhorteth from the ground (held forth chap. 2. v. 12.) of their being riſen with Chriſt, that they would earneſtly ſeek, know, and from knowledge, delight in things which are above, to wit, Heaven, happineſſe, and all ſpirituall graces; and not in things earthly, ſuch as riches, honors, pleaſures, together with thoſe ſuperſtitious rites placed in things earthly and periſhing, whereof he ſpoke before; and that becauſe Chriſt their Head, their Husband, is above, at the right hand of God, compleatly glorified, and intruſted with full power to diſpenſe all things for his peoples good, *Eph.* 1. v. 20. 22. *Doct.* 1. Our ſerious minding of the main and ſubſtantiall duties of pietie and righteouſneſſe, would ſerve to divert exceedingly from unneceſſary debates about, and practizing of ſuperſtitious rites and ceremonies in divine worſhip: for, the Apoſtle (having reaſoned againſt thoſe chap. 2.) ſubjoyneth this exhortation, to *ſet their affections on things which are above*, as a moſt excellent diverſion from them. 2. The doctrine of ſalvation and free grace, is then rightly learned, when the fruits of an holy life do flow from the knowledge of it; otherwayes, the grace of God is turned into wantonneſſe, *Jude* v. 4. So *Paul* (having given a ſhort ſum of ſaving doctrine) exciteth to holineſſe of life, as the moſt ſutable fruits of ſuch doctrine: *ſeek the things which are above, &c.* 3. As Heaven and glory: ſo the ſaving graces of God's Spirit are *things above*; as coming from above, *James* 3. 17. and elevating the heart of him who hath them, above things earthly, to entertain communion with God here, that he may live above with God for ever, *Phil.* 3. 20, 21. Thus they are ſaid to be above,

above; *ſeek the things which are above.* 4. Heaven, and ſaving graces which lead to it, are to be ſought, and diligently ſought: *ſeek the things which are above.* The word ſignifieth a diligent ſearch, and is applyed to thoſe who are vehemently deſirous to have that which they ſeek, 1. *Pet.* 5.-8. *Mark* 12.12. 5. That Heaven and things heavenly may be thus ſought diligently, we muſt know ſomewhat of the worth which is in them, and from knowledge put a price upon them: *Set your affection on things above.* The word rendered *affection* here, in the Originall comprehendeth the operations of the underſtanding, will, and affections: So it is to know them, from knowledge to affect them, and ſo to ſeek them, 6. Things earthly, and things heavenly, are in two contrary ballances; ſo that the more of the heart is given to the one, the other getteth the leſſe: for, he oppoſeth thoſe two, *Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth.* 7. Though we may uſe the world, and things worldly, yea, and ſeek them moderatly, that ſo we may have the uſe of them, 1 *Tim.* 5.8. yet they are to be ſought in ſubordination, and not in oppoſition to things heavenly: They muſt not be ſought as our laſt end and furtheſt ſhot, *Pſal.* 49. 11. not by unlawfull means, *Eph.* 4. 28. or, with neglect of God's worſhip, *Matth.* 6.33. not ſo, but to reverence and ſubmit to God, when he croſſeth and diſappointeth us in them, *Job* 1.21. for, in this ſenſe he commands, *Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth.* 8. Not onely are reall Believers riſen with Chriſt; First, judicially, Chriſt's reſurrection (as all his other actions, wherein he ſuſtained our perſon) being imputed to us, ſo, as to obtain what was purchaſed by them: See chap. 2. v. 20. *doct.* 1. And ſecondly, in their own perſons, all Believers being really and perſonally quickened and raiſed from the death of ſin, to newneſſe of life, by vertue of Chriſt's reſurrection, *Rom.* 6.4. as that, whereby he evidenced his purchaſing of holineſs for them, by his death, which he doth afterward beſtow upon them. But beſides, all the Members of the viſible Church

Church are in ſome ſenſe riſen with him, in ſo far as they are actually tyed by their profeſſing and intereſt in him, 1 *Joh.* 2. 6. and by the Covenant ſealed in their Baptiſm, *Rom.* 6. 2, 3. to make uſe of the vertue purchaſed by his reſurrection, for raiſing of them up from the death of ſin, to the life of grace, for, he ſupponeth they are riſen with Chriſt: *If ye be therefore riſen with Chriſt.* 9. From this it followeth, that all within the viſible Church, whether regenerate, or unregenerate, are to make uſe of this conſideration of their being raiſed with Chriſt, as a ſtrong argument to make them ſeek after Heaven, and endeavor holineſſe of life: the latter ſort being ingaged to make uſe of the power of his reſurrection for this end, & having Heaven and holineſſe purchaſed for them, if they will but by faith flee unto him: the former ſort having an actual right unto thoſe things already, as being judicially riſen with him, and the begun life of holineſſe beſtowed upon them, by vertue of his reſurrection, and more of that vertue, for compleating of what remaineth, in readineſſe to be communicated unto them, if they will but imploy it by faith: for, from this ground he inforceth holineſſe; *If ye be therefore riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things, &c.* 10. Jeſus Chriſt in his Humane Nature is now in Heaven, and not upon earth; elſe the Apoſtle's argument would not hold, *to ſeek things which are above*, becauſe *he is there.* 11. The love which Chriſtians do bear unto Chriſt, ought to be ſuch, that the very place where he is, ought to be lovely for his ſake: their affections being wholly ſet upon it, and upon thoſe things which are in it, and flow from it, or tend towards it: for, ſo he reaſoneth, *Set your affection on things above, where Chriſt is.* 12. The great glory which Chriſt our Head injoyeth in Heaven, together with the power and authority put upon him for the Churches good, eſpecially for beſtowing of grace and glory, *Acts* 5. 3, is a ſtrong incouragement to make the Members of the Church, and chiefly reall Believers, ſet about the ſtudy of holineſſe: for, this glory and power of his, is ſignified by his ſitting

at the right hand of God, *Eph.* 1. 20, 21, 22, 23. and from this he reaſoneth, that they ſhould ſeek thoſe things which are above, whereby he compriſeth all thoſe duties wherein holineſſe conſiſts, even from this, *that Chriſt is ſitting there at the right hand of God.*

Verſ. 3. *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.*

4. *When Chriſt who is our life ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.*

He giveth further reaſons to inforce the exhortation; Firſt, they were ſpiritually dead to ſin, and by conſequence to thoſe earthly things, ſo, as not to place their happineſs in them, or to be ſinfully eager in ſeeking after them. 2. Though their ſpirituall life, whereof they were partakers by their riſing with Chriſt, was for the time hid under croſſes and infirmities; yet it was ſurely kept for them by God in Chriſt, v. 3. and ſhould hereafter glorioufly appear in Chriſt's ſecond coming, v. 4. *Doct.* 1. Reall Believers are ſpiritually dead, not in ſin, *Eph.* 2. 1. but to ſin, *Rom.* 6. 11. the dominion and reign of ſin being ſhaken off, *Rom.* 6. 14. and its ſtrength much weakened by the power of grace, *Gal.* 5. 17. though not totally ſubdued, *Rom.* 7. 18. and Chriſt having undertaken to ſubdue it wholly in them, *Eph.* 5. 27. And all the members of the Church (though not as yet real Believers) have ingaged themſelves to imploy the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt for the ſubduing of ſin; whence in ſome ſenſe, to wit, *judicially* by obligation, they may alſo be ſaid to be dead: for, the Apoſtle ſupponeth of all of them, every one in his own way, that they were thus dead: *for ye are dead*, ſaith he. 2. The conſideration of this, that we are thus dead to ſin, is a ſtrong argument for the not-inſlaving of our affections to things earthly: for, that would argue ſin to be yet reigning, and were an adding of fuell to ſin, for keeping of it alive, after we have under-taken to be its death: It's uſed as an argument

ment here to that purpose: *for ye are dead.* 3. The spirituall life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, is a life desirable, and onely worthy of the name of life, our naturall life being but short, uncertain, and common to us with devils, reprobates, yea and with beasts; and so unworthy to be called *life*, being compared with this, 1 *Tim.* 5. 6. *Our life is hid*, saith he, speaking of this spirituall life, as if there had been no other life but it. 4. This spirituall life, though really injoyed by Believers, as having grace in possession, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. and a right to future glory, *Joh.* 3. 16. yet it is hid: the crosse which accompanieth godlinesse *Act.* 14. -22. together with the many out-breakings and infirmities of the godly, *Gal.* 6. 1. and the nature of this life, which consisteth in things spirituall, as adoption, justification, &c. *Gal.* 2. 20. those things make this life not at all discernable by the wicked, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. yea, and hardly by the regenerate man himself, who is carryed much to judge of things according to sense, *Ps.* 73. 13, 14. So *our life is hid.* 5. Though this life be hid, yet it is surely kept, being hid with Christ in God, as out of the knowledge, so out of the hazard of the world: God the fountain of all grace and glory, having given all the fulnesse thereof unto Christ the Mediator, *Joh.* 3. 35. from which fulnesse he is to bestow so much as is fitting for our condition here, *Act.* 5. 31. reserving the rest to be forth-coming for us in glory hereafter, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *It is hid with Christ in God.* 6. So near is that union which is betwixt Christ and Believers, that he is their life: His life and theirs are in a kind one, *Gal.* 2. 20. he having purchased this life for us, 1 *Joh.* 4. 9. and possessing the fulnesse of it in himself, *Joh.* 14. 6. that he may communicate it unto them, *Joh.* 5. 40. and having communicated the first principles and seeds of it already, *Rom.* 6. 11. besides that, he is the object of this life, their happinesse and life consisting in their knowing and injoying of him, *Joh.* 17. 3. for, *when Christ who is our life*, saith he. 7. As Christ now in his bodily presence is removed from us: so he is again to appear, when he shall

come the ſecond time unexpectedly, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 2. and with great glory, accompanied with Angels, and flames of fire, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8. to judge the quick and the dead, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. *when Chriſt ſhall appear.* 8. There is a ſtate of glory, both in ſoul (1 *Cor.* 13. 12.) and body (*Phil.* 3. 21.) waiting for the people of God: *then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.* 9. This glory of theirs is to be ſuſpended untill Chriſt's ſecond coming: There will be alwayes ſomewhat in-lacking till then; but then their glory ſhall be compleat, which ſhould make us long for it, *Phil.* 3. 20. *Then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.* 10. The faith of approaching glory at Chriſts ſecond coming, is a ſtrong argument to make us wean our affections from things earthly, and endeavor earneſtly the ſtudy of a holy life: an Heir of a Kingdom will not be much taken with petty pleaſures, his minde is ſo carryed up to higher things: for, *Paul* preſſeth them to ſet their affections on things which are above, becauſe, ſaith he, *ye ſhall alſo appear with him in glory.*

Verſ. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanneſſe, inordinate affection, evill concupiſcence, and covetouſneſſe, which is idolatry:*

He proponeth the former exhortation more particularly, by branching out the Chriſtian mans task in two; Firſt, mortification of ſin; and preſſeth them to mortifie or put to death their members, not of their naturall body, for, that were a ſin againſt the ſixt Command, but of the maſſe of corruption, or body of death, which was in them, to wit, their corrupt luſts and affections, which are ſaid to be *upon the earth*, becauſe they draw the ſoul down towards earth: whereof he mentioneth ſome, which are carnall and fleſhly, as tending to fulfill our unlawfull pleaſures, *fornication, uncleanneſſe, &c. Doct.* 1. The work of mortification, whereby a ſinner ſenſible of the evill of ſin, (*Act.* 2. 37, 38.) doth honeſtly reſolve, (*Job*

34.

34. v. 31.) and accordingly endeavor, (2 *Cor.* 7. 11.) to ſubdue ſin throughly, root and branch, or to put it to death; and this not onely one ſin, but all known ſins, *Hoſ.* 14. 2. eſchewing carefully the occaſions of ſin, *Job* 31. 1. and uſing all means which may tend to the ſubduing of it; ſuch as prayer, (2 *Cor.* 12. 8.) hearing of the Word, (1 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2.) yea, and in ſome caſes, faſting, *Mark* 9. 29. But chiefly, acting faith in Chriſt for ſtrength, *Phil.* 4. 13. This is a work ſo neceſſary, that the life of glory to be manifeſted at Chriſt's ſecond comming, cannot be attained without it: for, from what he ſaid, v. 4. of their appearing with Chriſt in glory, he inferreth, *Mortifie therefore, &c.* 2. This work of mortification is not perfected at an inſtant: So much of this body of death remaineth ſtill in life, that the beſt of Chriſtians muſt make it their daily task, to mortifie their members, though they be already mortified in part: for, v. 3. they were dead, and yet he commands here, *Mortifie your members.* 3. Scripture-commands for mortifying of ſin, do not evince a power in men unrenewed, to obey what is commanded; if we conſider that ſuch commands are given, even to thoſe who are already renewed, and are hereby injoyned to carry on the begun work of Mortification towards ſome perfection, from a principle of habituall grace already infuſed in them: They are indeed directed alſo to the unrenewed, who are hereby taught what they ought, but not what they are able to do, *Jer.* 13. 23. and are alſo inabled to do what they ought; the Lord making uſe of thoſe exhortations, as means for conveying of ſtrength to do that which he commandeth to be done; So, ſpeaking unto them who were dead, v. 3. he preſcribeth, *Mortifie your members.* 4. There is a body of ſin, and corrupt nature in us, to which our particular vices, ſinfull luſts, motions and affections are as members; Our corrupt nature and will making uſe of them, and working by them, as the naturall body doth imploy its members: beſides that, ſin doth ſpread it ſelf through all the members of

our body, making each of them ſervants unto iniquity, *Rom.* 6.19. Hence he ſaith, *Mortifie your members*, meaning thoſe ſinfull luſts and affections. 5. Not onely are the outward acts of *fornication*, or filthineſſe, betwixt parties, both free from the yoke of marriage, to be eſchewed; and of *uncleanneſſe*, whereby are uſually ſignified all other ſorts of filthy luſts, *Rom.* 1. 24. but alſo that impotencie of minde, whereby temptations to luſt do eaſily take impreſſion, and are not much reſiſted, ſet forth here by *inordinate affection*, or, (as it may be turned) *ſoftneſs of minde*; which yeeldeth eaſily to the temptation: *fornication, uncleanneſſe, inordinate affection.* 6. Yea, the firſt inordinate motions of luſt in the heart, which are not followed forth after deliberation and advice, and are ſet down under the name of *evill concupiſcence*; even thoſe are to be mortified: *evil concupiſcence.* 7. We do then ſet againſt ſin to ſome purpoſe, when we purſue it to the den, and labour to pluck it up by the very roots, with-drawing from thoſe things which adde fuell to it; for he will have them going from the outward acts of filthineſſe to the inward root: *evill concupiſcence*; and to ſet againſt *covetouſneſſe* alſo, whereby luſt is fed and nouriſhed; *evill concupiſcence and covetouſneſſe.* 8. Covetouſneſſe, which conſiſts in an immoderate deſire to acquire or keep worldly riches, is a ſin which all Chriſtians are to mortifie; not onely becauſe it provideth oyl to make all other ſins burn; but it hath a kind of idolatry in it, as drawing our love, truſt, fear, and joy from God and his ſervice, to be taken up with, and laid out upon wealth, and riches more than any other ſins: *and covetouſneſſe which is idolatry.*

Verſ. 6. *For which things ſake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of diſobedience.*

He preſſeth the exhortation by arguments. The firſt is taken from the wrath of God, manifeſted in its ſad effects upon thoſe who have continued contumacious and impenitent under thoſe ſins. *Doct.* 1. Unbelief of divine pro-

promiſes and threatnings, and obſtinat impenitency under ſin, go together; the latter following upon the former: for, *diſobedience* ſignifieth both misbelief, and contumacy, or diſobedience. 2. It is not ſin in it ſelf ſo much, as obduration in it, which draweth down wrath, chiefly laſting wrath upon the ſinner; *For thoſe things wrath cometh upon the children of diſobedience*, or children of contumacy. 3. Whatever judgments be already inflicted upon wicked men, they have ground to look for more; for, *wrath cometh* in the mean time, and is ſtill coming *upon the children of diſobedience*. 4. Though the Lord be ſometimes wroth with the truly godly becauſe of ſin; yet he is not wroth for ever, *Iſa.* 57. 16. he debateth with them but in meaſure, *Iſa.* 27. 7, 8. The wrath which is due unto, and is accordingly poured forth upon contumacious ſinners, is of another kind; as being everlaſting, without any mixture of fatherly mercy, and flowing from ſin-purſuing juſtice, *Matth.* 25. 4. for which cauſe he holdeth forth that wrath, *which cometh on the children of diſobedience*, as being moſt terrifying. 5. As the conſideration of the terror of divine wrath is a ſtrong awband to reſtrain from ſin; So it is moſt moving, when conſidered in the ſad and woful experience of thoſe who have found the dolefull effects of it: for, he mentioneth the effects of this wrath upon others to ſcar them. 6. Sin keepeth ſo much of its old intereſt in the beſt; and even Believers ſometimes are ſo much overtaken with ſpiritual deadneſſe, (*Iſa.* 64. 7.) that there is need to preſent the terror of divine wrath unto them, to ſcar them from ſin, and excite them to duty: for, the Apoſtle proponeth the terror of divine wrath, even to thoſe believing Coloſſians.

Verſ. 7. *In the which ye alſo walked ſometime, when ye lived in them.*

Here is a ſecond argument taken from their by-paſt long contiuance in theſe ſins, *when they lived in them*, or,

were in their natural ſtate. *Doct.* 1. It is not ſome moe or fewer particular acts of a man's life, but his ordinary ſtrain and way, according to which, ſentence is to paſſe upon his ſtate, whether it be good or bad: It was their *walking* in ſin, and making a daily trade of it, which argued them to be in nature, or *living in ſin.* 2. Before a mans effectual calling, there is no difference betwixt him and the moſt godleſſe man that is, ſo as to make God his debtor either by promiſe, or becauſe of any worth which is in him to give him grace, *Rom.* 11. 35. for, as long as thoſe Coloſſians were unconverted, they were as much inſlaved to ſin, as the moſt obſtinat of natural men are: *In which ye alſo walked.* 3. A mans walking in ſin, or his ordinary ſtrain of breaking forth in the outward acts of it, dependeth upon his living in ſin, or upon the inward power and dominion which ſin exerceth in him, even as natural life is the cauſe of outward motion; So that the beſt way to curb the outward acts, is, to ſtrike at the life and power of ſin within; *In which ye walked when ye lived in them.* 4. Our calling to mind of by-paſt ſins, and our long continuance in them, ſhould not be without an holy indignation at them, and at our ſelves for them, ſo as to ſcar us from them in time coming: for, the Apoſtle mentioneth their by-paſt continuance in thoſe ſins, as one argument to ſcar them from them.

Verſ. 8. *But now you alſo put off all theſe, Anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

9. *Lie not one to another,*----

He returneth to the former exhortation of mortifying ſin, and exemplifieth it in another ſort of corruptions, to wit, thoſe which are more ſpiritual, whereof he mentioneth ſix; The firſt three are ſins of the heart, the reſt are ſins of the mouth. *Doct.* 1. So deceitful are our hearts in adhering to ſin, even when they ſeem to quit it, *Pſal.* 78. 36, 37. that we ſhould not be eaſily ſatisfied with our mor-

mortifying, or ſubduing of it: for, *Paul* (having commanded them to mortifie and kill ſin, ver. 5.) he biddeth them here *put it off*, which ſpeaks ſomewhat further, to wit, a removing of it quite out of ſight, as we do dead bodies, when we bury them: for ſo the word ſometimes ſignifieth. 2. Though all ſins be not alike throughly mortified, there being ſome more deeply rooted than others, *Pſal.* 18. v.--23. yet the grace of mortification ſtriketh at all known ſin, and ſpareth none; for, it oppoſeth ſin, as it is ſin. *Gen.* 39. v.--9. and ſo all ſin: So the Apoſtle commandeth, *But now alſo put you off all thoſe.* And the particulars after mentioned are not for reſtriction, but for inſtance, or, example. 3. In the work of mortification we are not to reſt upon the ſubduing of theſe ſins which are groſſe and fleſhly, but are to proceed againſt more ſpiritual ſins alſo, which have as much of guilt in them before God, (*Gal.* 5. 20.) though not ſo much of infamy before men; So the Apoſtle exhorteth to *put off anger, wrath, &c.* 4. Anger, which (as diſtinguiſhed from wrath and malice) is an unjuſt deſire of revenge, is a ſin unbeſeeming Chriſtians, and ſo to be put off; chiefly when *wrath* is joyned with it, which (as it is diſtinguiſhed from anger) pointeth at the gorging and ſwelling of the blood about the heart, which fireth the eye and tongue, even that paſſionate commotion which uſeth to accompany anger, transforming a man to a very beaſt, thruſting him forward to act ſome miſchief, *Luke* 4. 28, 29. and baniſhing the Spirit of God, *Eph.* 4. 30, 31. *Put off anger, wrath, &c.* 5. But then is anger and wrath moſt dangerous and unbeſeeming Chriſtians, when *malice* is joyned, which (as it is diſtinguiſhed from anger and wrath) is rooted anger, and continuing wrath, making a man implacable, and obſtructing the current of pardoning grace, *Mark* 11. 26. and making all he doth in Gods ſervice to be loſt labour, *Matth.* 5. 23, 24. *Put off malice.* 6. Sins of the tongue and outward man, are to be mortified, aſwell as ſins of the heart; they being in ſome reſpect more dangerous, *Matth.* 18. 7. becauſe more

ſcan-

ſcandalous: *Put off blaſphemy, filthy communication, &c.*
7. The right order to be kept in mortification, is, to begin with the heart, and from thence to proceed to the tongue and outward man: for, he commandeth them to put off heart evils in the firſt place, *anger, wrath, and malice*; and the evils of the tongue, as *blaſphemie, &c.* in the next.
8. Diſgraceful and contumelious ſpeaking againſt our neighbours, as it is the reſult of anger, wrath and malice: ſo it is a ſin to be mortified, as very unbeſeeming Chriſtians: whether it be by open railing, ſecret backbiting, *Pro.26.22.* by deriſion, or jearing at their ſins and infirmities, to ſhame them, *Eph.5.4.* or by imprecation, curſing of, and wiſhing evil unto them, *Rom.12.14.* for, ſeing the reſt of the evils mentioned here relate to our neighbor, as their immediate object; we conceive the word *blaſphemie* relates to him alſo, and is to be taken for diſgrace in words uttered againſt men, as *Rom.3.8-: Blaſphemie.*
9. Filthy ſpeaking, or ſpeaking of thoſe things which belong to the luſt of uncleanneſſe, is unbeſeeming Chriſtians, and ſo to be mortified, as an evidence of a rotten heart, *Mat.12.34.* and becauſe it maketh the heart more filthy, infecting alſo the hearers, 1 *Cor.15.33.* the heart of man being as powder to the fire, eaſily taken with ſuch tentations: *And filthy communication out of your mouth.*
10. The ſin of lying, whereby one ſpeaketh that which he knoweth to be falſe, is a ſin alſo to be mortified: and this indefinitly, whether we mean the *hurtful lie*, tending to our neighbours prejudice; or the *officious lie*, tending to our profit; or yet the *ſporting lie*, tending to recreation or delight: Scripture condemneth all without reſtriction, *Revel.21.8.* and *22.-5.* and all of them violate that natural order which God hath appointed betwixt the mind and the tongue: *lie not one to another.*

Verſ. 9. ----*ſeeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds:*
10. *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.*

Here

Here is a further argument, inforcing the exhortation, taken from the work of regeneration, to which, all of them were ingaged by their Profeſſion and Covenant ſealed in Baptiſm, and which was really begun in thoſe who were true believers among them, whereof he aſſigneth two parts: Firſt, *the putting off the old man with his deeds*, that is, our naturall corruption, conveyed unto us by carnall generation, and actuall ſins flowing from thence, v.--9. Secondly, *putting on the new man*, that is, new and ſpirituall qualities, whereby our corrupt nature is renewed, the ſaving and operative knowledge of God in Chriſt, being imparted to it, which work, God by his creating power doth carry on, that thereby he may repair his defaced Image in man. *Doct.* 1. From this, that our originall corruption is called an *old man*, and is ſaid to be *put off*, by a Metaphore taken from cloathes, we learn ſeveral things of the nature and power of it; firſt, originall corruption ſpreadeth it ſelf far, even through the whole man, ſoul (*Gen.* 6. 5.) body, *Rom.* 6. 19. and all; therefore is it called a *man*. Secondly, Not onely is it born with us, but hath its riſe from *Adams* fall, *Rom.* 5. 12. It then took life, and is conveyed ſince from father to ſon, unto all deſcending from *Adam*, *Pſ.* 51. 5. by ordinary generation, *Luke* 1. 35. hence it is called an *old man*; as alſo becauſe in the godly it is drawing towards expiration and upon the declining hand, *Rom.* 7. 20. Thirdly, it adhereth very cloſely to us, as a man's garments, and more cloſely than any garment, yea, nor a man's skin: for, humane art can draw off the one, but onely the power of God can free us from the other, *Rom.* 7. 24. Fourthly, it is not of the ſubſtance or being, either of ſoul or body, it is onely an adventitious quality, *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. for it is compared to garments. And fifthly, as old as this corruption is; yet it is very active and reſtleſſe; not as other things, which as they grow in age, ſo fall more quiet; but this *old man* hath *his deeds*. And ſixthly, as near unto us, as far ſpread through us, as old and active as this corruption is, the Child of God getteth

getteth it *put off*, though not fully, yet in its guilt, *Rom.* 8. 1. and in its eſteem and reigne, *Rom.* 6.14. in his reſolution, *Rom.*7. 19. and in ſome meaſure in his practice, and execution, 1 *Cor.*6. 11. This is ſupponed here, *ſeeing ye have put off the old man.* *Doct.* 2. According as the old man of our in-bred corruption is put off, and weakned within; So, actuall ſins flowing there-from, are weakened without. The old hand and tongue are inconſiſtent with a renewed heart; *ye have put off the old man with his deeds.* 3. From this, that gracious and ſpiritual qualities are called the *new-man*, and ſaid to be put on as new garments, we learn ſeverall things relating to the nature of grace: Firſt, it ſpreadeth it ſelf as far through the whole man, as ſin doth, 1 *Theſſ.*5.23. So it's called a *man.* Secondly, it is not born with us, *Eph.* 2. 3. neither cometh it from the firſt, but ſecond *Adam*, Chriſt Jeſus, *Eph.*2.8. and is upon the growing hand, towards its full ſtrength in the godly, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. therefore is it called *new.* Thirdly, it adhereth cloſely to us, as ſin did, 1 *Joh.* 3.9. and yet is not naturall to us, but an addition to our nature, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. we are naked without it, and it is a beautifull ornament to the ſoul, as new garments are to the body, *Rev.* 3. 17, 18. from which the Metaphore is taken; *and have put on.* *Doct.* 4. We once had this new man, thoſe gracious qualities, at our firſt creation: for, God made man perfect, *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. *which is renewed.* It ſignifieth, to reſtore a thing deformed and antiquated, to its ancient form and beautie. 5. Thoſe gracious qualities were all loſt unto us, to wit, in *Adam:* the Lord dealing with him in that firſt Covenant, as with a publick perſon, repreſenting all who were to come of him, *Rom.*5. 12. This is ſupponed, while he ſaith, *which is renewed.* 6. It is Chriſt's aim in giving grace, to recover that in his own which was loſt in *Adam: which is renewed*, or reſtored to its ancient form and beauty; *and after the image of him, &c.* that is, the Image of God which was loſt in *Adam*, *Gen*, 5.3. and did conſiſt in perfect conformity to God's Law, in both the Tables thereof, and accordingly

cordingly is ſet forth by righteouſneſſe and holineſſe, *Eph.* 4.24. 7. The recovery of that which was loſt in *Adam*, as it is begun in the firſt inſtant of regeneration; So, it's not compleated at firſt, but is a continued action, even unto death; *which is renewed*: It imports a continued action, the word being in the preſent time. 8. The ſum and compend of this *new man*, is, the knowledge of God in Chriſt, not theoretick and notionall onely, but practicall and operative, which worketh ſuch a change both in the outward and inward man, that the grace of God in Chriſt, is really acknowledged by us in our minde, affection and work, *Eph.* 4.21, 22. *renewed in knowledge* or *acknowledgment*; for, ſo the word ſignifieth, and is rendered, 1 *Cor.* 16.18. 9. So dead are we by nature to holineſſe and grace, that no leſſe than creating power is required to work it in us; *the image of him who created him.* 10. There is not any argument more moving and effectually exciting unto holineſſe of life with a ſincere Chriſtian, than that which is taken from his ingagement to it by profeſſion, and the firſt beginning thereof wrought in him already by the Spirit of God: for, this is the ſcope, that they would mortifie and put off ſuch and ſuch ſins; *ſeeing they had put off the old man, and put on the new.*

Verſ. 11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Chriſt is all, and in all.*

He amplifieth, cleareth and ſtrengtheneth the former reaſon taken from renovation, by removing falſe cauſes of helping or hurting us before God in that matter; ſuch as firſt, difference of Nations. Secondly, the obſervation of Moſaicall Ceremonies, the practice whereof, as of a thing indifferent, was allowed for a time unto the Jewes, *Rom.* 1.5. untill they ſhould be honourably buried by the more clear and univerſall propagation of the Goſpel. Thirdly, poliſhed civility and humane learning,

ing, which flouriſhed among the Greeks, to whom all other Nations were Barbarians, chiefly the Scythians, as being more rude and unpoliſhed than any other Nation. Fourthly, the different conditions of life, as of Maſter and Servant; under which are comprehended all the different ſtates of men in things of this life: of all which he affirmeth that (however ſome of thoſe differences had their own weight under the Old Teſtament, yet) now every man, in every ſtate, was alike unto God in the point of renovation and ſalvation through Chriſt: the having of thoſe things did help no man, and the want of them did hurt no man, Chriſt being all, which in point of Religion can commend us to God. *Doct.* 1. It is uſuall for men to dream that they will be the better liked of by God, becauſe of outward relations, privileges and accompliſhments, which they injoy beyond others: as that they are of ſuch a Nation and ſtock of people, *Matth.* 3.9. that they injoy ſuch privileges, *Jer.* 7. 4. that they are tight and ſmooth in their outward carriage, *Luke* 18.11. that they are great, wiſe and rich, *Joh.* 7.48. for, it is to obviate this apprehenſion, that thoſe words are added, ſhewing that the having of thoſe things doth not help: *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew.* 2. It is uſuall alſo for men to conclude, that God will take the leſſe notice of them for the want of thoſe things, as that they are come of an evill kinde, *Matth.* 8. 8. unpoliſhed and rude in their naturals, *Joh.* 7.49. poor and baſe, *Mark* 5.28. for, it's to obviate this apprehenſion alſo, that he ſheweth, the want of thoſe doth not hurt: *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew.* 3. Though under the Old Teſtament God did diſpenſe grace, and the means of grace, with reſpect had to different Nations; yea, to the ſeverall ſexes, and the outward conditions of men; the Jews being then his onely people, (*Pſal.* 147. 19, 20.) and among them the Males, (*Gen.* 17.10.) and free-men, (*Levit.* 22. 10.) being admitted to injoy ſome privileges, which the Females and bond-men injoyed not: And though the Lord doth yet under the New Teſta-

Teſtament, allow and command, that civill reſpects be put upon men, according to their different degrees, (*Rom.* 13.7.) and hath not aboliſhed all Church-privileges either, which are to have their own weight and uſe with Chriſtians, *Acts* 2.39. yet he doth not regard any of thoſe in the matter of regeneration; ſo, as either to give grace the more readily, or to diſpenſe with the want of grace, or, with intermitting the exerciſe of grace, becauſe of having thoſe things; or, to with-hold grace the more, or, to think the leſſe of it where it is, becauſe of the want of thoſe things; *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew.* 4. Jeſus Chriſt is *all*, which God regardeth in the matter of regeneration: what is inlacking through want of privileges or outward eminencie, is made up in him; and what naturall men expect from thoſe, is to be found in him, and much more: for, he is *all*, to wit, which is required in this matter: whatever a man be otherwayes, he is well, and commended ſufficiently to God if he have him; and he is nought if he want him, even him, who is made of God, wiſedome, righteouſneſſe, ſanctification and redemption, 1 *Cor.* 1.30. and this not onely, becauſe he hath merited all, but by his Spirit he applyeth all to, and worketh all in, us: *but Chriſt is all.* 5. Before Chriſt be thus *all* unto the ſoul, he muſt firſt be in us; not perſonally, as the Godhead is in the Humane Nature, chap. 2.9. but ſpiritually, he being united to us and we to him by faith, *Eph.* 3. 17. So, *he is all in all.* 6. Chriſt in uniting himſelf to ſinners, hath no exception of perſons, becauſe of outward reſpects; he will neither reſpect, nor reject the poor for their poverty, nor the great for their dignity: *he is all in all.*

Verſ. 12. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſſe, humbleneſſe of minde, meekneſſe, long-ſuffering:*

Thus far of mortification, from v. 5. The ſecond branch of a Chriſtian man's task, is, the putting on, and exerciſing

ſing of ſeverall vertues, whereof he numbereth five in this verſe: the firſt three, reſpect our neighbour in miſery; the laſt two, reſpect our neighbour alſo, but as having injured us; and he preſſeth them from their election, ſanctification, and ſtate of favour with God. *Doct.* 1. It is not ſufficient to ceaſe from doing evill, but we muſt alſo learn to do well: and the ſame arguments which inforce the one, do alſo inforce the other; for (having preſſed upon them to mortifie ſin in the verſes preceding) he exhorts them to do good in this verſe; and that by the ſame argument, as appears from the illative particle *therefore*: *put on therefore*. 2. There is a neceſſary connexion betwixt the new man, or, habits of grace in the heart, and the exerciſe of Chriſtian vertues in thoſe duties which we owe to our neighbour: for, from what he hath ſaid verſe 10. of their having put on the new man, he preſſeth upon them the exerciſe of thoſe vertues; *put on therefore*. 3. The knowledge of our election in its own nature, is ſo far from making us looſe the reins to profanity, that it layeth on a ſtrict obligation to lead an holy life; So he reaſoneth from their election to the exerciſe of thoſe vertues: for, thoſe arguments, as it ſeemeth, ſpeak only to the truly gracious among them: *put on therefore, as the elect of God*. 4. Then do we rightly paſſe ſentence upon our ſelves as elected, when our holineſſe doth kyth: for, he joyneth theſe two, *the elect of God, holy*; the latter as the evidence of the former. 5. Our having holineſſe; and our knowing ſo much, is a ſtrong argument to excite unto more holineſſe; So he reaſoneth from their being holy, *put on therefore as the elect of God, holy*. 6. The Lord's love of complacencie towards us, whereby he delighteth in thoſe who are truely gracious, approving of his own graces in them, *Joh.* 14. 21. ſhould conſtrain us to love him again, and kyth our love in the exerciſe of thoſe graces which he calleth for in relation to our neighbour: for, he calls them *beloved*, to wit, with the Lords love of complacencie, ſeeing it is diſtinguiſhed from his eternall love of election; and reaſoneth from

from their being ſo beloved: *Put on as beloved.* 7. We ought to have a moſt inward ſenſe of, and ſympathie with the miſery of others; *put on bowels of mercy*: the word expreſſeth ſuch an intenſe motion of the heart and ſoul, that the very fleſhly bowels are commoved by it. 8. Our ſympathie with others under miſerie, ought not to be inward onely, but outward alſo, by helping them in their miſery according to our power, which is here expreſſed by *kindneſſe*, which they were to *put on*. 9. The grace of humility, whereby a man from the ſenſe of his own infirmities, hath a moderate eſteem of himſelf, (*Phil.* 2. 3.) and deſireth that others ſhould have ſuch an eſteem of him alſo, (1 *Cor.* 3. 5.) is moſt neceſſary, as making way for more grace, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. *humbleneſſe of minde.* 10. The grace of meekneſſe, which maketh a man tractable, ſo that he is not eaſily provoked with the fooleries, infirmities, and leſſer wrongs done unto him by others: as alſo *long-ſuffering*, which moderateth anger, even under greater injuries; both of thoſe are neceſſary graces: for, hereby we are made to bear with the infirmities of others, and ſo to cure them, *Gal.* 6. 1. we are kept from avenging our ſelves, *Rom.* 12. 18, 19. and in our patience made to poſſeſſe our ſouls, *Luke* 21. 19. *put on meekneſſe, long-ſuffering.*

Verſ. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrell againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo* do *ye.*

He recommendeth the practice of meekneſſe and long-ſuffering, which conſiſts in bearing with, and pardoning even of reall injuries done by others, and perſwadeth them unto it, from Chriſt's example in pardoning us. *Doct.* 1. Chriſtians are not ſo perfect, but they will be in ſome things unpleaſant: yea, and ſometimes injurious to others. This is ſupponed while they are commanded to *forbear one another*: 2. It is the duty of Chriſtians, mutually to tolerate and forbear one another,

ther, even though they be injurious: for, hereby a man overcometh himſelf and his own corrupt nature, which thirſteth after revenge, *Prov.* 16. 32. hereby he overcometh and ſhameth the party who did him wrong, 1 *Sam.* 24. 17. and keepeth God's way in overcoming of him, *Rom.* 12. 17. 21. *forbearing one another.* 3. It is not onely required of Chriſtians to forbear avenging of themſelves, but alſo to forgive and pardon thoſe who have done them wrong; which, beſides ceaſing from private revenge, doth import the baniſhing of malice and deſire of revenge out of the heart, yea, and loving thoſe who do us hurt, *Luke* 6. 27. *forgiving one another.* Onely the Magiſtrate is not hereby bound up from executing his office againſt publick offenders; nor yet private men are diſcharged from having recourſe to the Magiſtrate, for attaining reſtauration to their right, and reparation of their wrongs; providing they be not acted with private ſplene, and a ſpirit of rigour, (*Phi.* 4. 5.) but with zeal to juſtice, and pitty to their party; leſt he, and others alſo be hardened in miſchief: for, magiſtracy is God's ordinance, *Rom.* 13. 4. and ſo may be imployed by Chriſtians. 4. Duties of forbearance, and forgiving wrongs, ought to be mutuall; there being no man who hath not ſomewhat which maketh him the object of thoſe duties, *James* 3. 2. So, *forbearing one another*, is required. 5. The fore-mentioned duties are alſo to be gone about by all, towards all, without exception of perſons or quarrels: the rich are to perform them towards the poor, aſwell as the poor towards the rich: for, he ſpeaks indefinitely, both as to perſons and injuries; *If any man have a quarrell againſt any.* 6. The more a man attains to know, that Chriſt hath pardoned himſelf, he will be the more inclinable to ſhow forgiveneſſe unto others: hence he ſpeaketh confidently to ſuch, *even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* 7. The example of Chriſt is a moſt convincing pattern for exciting us to pardon and forgive one another, if we conſider either the greatneſſe of thoſe wrongs which he pardoneth, (*Iſai.* 1. 18.) or our baſe-

neſſe

neſſe who do injure him, (*Iſai.* 40.-22-) or, his omnipotencie to right himſelf of the wrongs done unto him, *Matth.*10.28. Hence the Apoſtle holds forth this pattern: *even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.*

Verſ. 14. *And above all things* put on *charity, which is the bond of perfectneſſe.*

The Apoſtle, following the Metaphor taken from garments, exhorteth them to put on the grace of Charity, as the upper garment above the reſt, and ſo more precious than the reſt, commending it from this, that it is a tye or bond, which knitteth all the Members of the Church together, and maketh all their ſeverall gifts and graces cohere, and ſo be uſefull for the publick good; whereby the Church is made a perfect Body, able to diſcharge thoſe actions which are competent to it. *Doct.* 1. The grace of Charity, whereby from the fountain of love to God, we do love our neighbour, (*Matth.*22. 37,38.) is a moſt neceſſary grace; for, whatever we do without it, is not the exerciſe of any ſaving grace, but at the beſt onely of a morall vertue, 1 *Cor.* 13. 2,3. and the acts of all other vertues relating to our neighbour, are commended by it, and ſo are aſcribed to it, 1 *Cor.* 13.4. &c. Hence the Apoſtle commendeth to *put on charity*, as the upper garment *above all thoſe.* 2. As the Church, while rent aſunder, is a disjoynted and lame body, unfit for diſcharging thoſe actions which are competent to it (the rent and ſcattered members not working together for the Churches good; but rather imploying their parts, and abuſing their eſteem for graces to their own mutual prejudice) So, ſuch is the nature and power of this grace of Charity, that it knitteth together all theſe ſcattered Members, and makes their graces and gifts ſubſervient to the good one of another, and chiefly to the good of the whole; ſo that the Church is hereby made a compleat intire body, which was lame without it. In this ſenſe *Charity* is called *the bond of perfection.*

Verſ. 15. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which alſo ye are called in one body: and be ye thankfull.*

He exhorts, firſt, unto a peaceable frame of ſpirit towards others, ſuch as God approveth of; ſo that when any ſtrife ſhould ariſe among them, it might be overruled, and as it were, judicially compoſed by this peaceable temper: and this, becauſe they were called by God to entertain peace, and were all Members of one Body. And ſecondly, he exhorteth unto mutuall thankfulneſſe for favours received; for, as all the former duties relate to men as their immediate object; ſo, it would ſeem, this of *thankfulneſſe* muſt relate to man alſo. *Doct.* 1. The vertue of peace, importing a ſweet quieting of a man's own turbulent affections, ſuch as pride, envy, malice, &c. *Iſai.* 11.13. and a peaceable inclination towards the procuring and preſerving of concord with others (*Heb.* 12.14.) is moſt neceſſary for Chriſtians: *and let the peace of God rule.* 2. It is not every peaceable frame of ſpirit which is to be ſought after, but that whereof God is the Author and approver; which for attaining unto, or preſerving of concord, will diſpenſe with the loſſe, not of truth and holineſſe, (*Heb.* 12.14.) but onely of what is our own, eſpecially with the reſtraining and curbing of our ſinfull and turbulent humors, 2 *Cor.* 12.20. So it is *the peace of God*, to wit, whereof he is Author and approver, which ſhould *rule.* 4. Our eſteem of peace ought to be ſuch, that when any contention doth ariſe, our love to peace may preſently compeſce it, if it be poſſible, or at leaſt, order all our actions, which we are put to for our own neceſſary defence untill it be compoſed, (*Gen.* 13. 8,9.) *let the peace of God rule in your hearts:* It is a Metaphor taken from Judges in playes or ſtrifes, unto whoſe decreet all were bound to ſtand. 5. Chriſtians are called in a ſingular manner, to put on this peaceable temper; for, Chriſt doth fre-

frequently injoyn it, *Joh.* 13. 34. nothing marreth their work more, than the want of it, whether the thriving of grace in their own heart, or the ſucceſſe of the Goſpel towards others, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. they are called to be members of an excellent ſociety, and ſo ought to be peaceable in it, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 13. *To which alſo ye are called.* 6. The inviſible Church of real Believers is one myſtical body, knit by faith to Chriſt their head, *Eph.* 3. 17. and by the bond of love among themſelves, *Joh.* 13. 35. and the viſible Church is one politick body (1 *Cor.* 12. 27.) conjoyned with Chriſt the head, and amongſt themſelves by the external profeſſion of the ſame Truths, which union is ſealed by their partaking of the ſame Sacraments, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. *In one body.* 7. The conſideration of this, that Chriſtians are one body, is a ſtrong argument to excite unto peace; *In one body.* 8. Gratitude and thankfulneſſe for favours received from others, ſo as in our affections to prize the receit, to acknowledge it unto the beſtower, and to recompenſe it according to our power, and as the neceſſity of the benefactor, or common decency doth require; this is a vertue neceſſary for Chriſtians, as for other cauſes, ſo that peace may be kept; peace being broken, as frequently for injuries received; ſo ſometimes for favours not recompenſed, 1 *Sam.* 25. 7, 13. Therefore, unto the exhortation to peace, he ſubjoyneth, *and be ye thankeful.*

Verſ. 16. *Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all wiſdom, teaching and admoniſhing one another in pſalms and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

The Apoſtle having ſpoken of many vertues, and it being almoſt impoſſible to ſpeak of all, he exciteth them to the diligent ſtudy of Scripture, as the rule of all vertues; ſhewing alſo what uſe they ſhould make of Scripture. Firſt, for themſelves, that they might be made compleatly wiſe by it. Secondly, for others, that they

might teach and admoniſh them by it. Thirdly, in relation to God, they might take matter for ſpiritual praiſe unto him from it. *Doct.* 1. Miniſters ſhould excite people to the diligent ſtudy of Scripture: and people ought to be diligent in the ſtudy of it, ſo as they may become familiar with it, and it may ſink down through the ear and brain to the heart, and reſide in it, being fixed there by frequent reading, hearing, meditating upon, *Pſal.* 1. 2. and conferring about it, *Pſ.* 119. 46. whereby alſo they may attain to a copious meaſure of the knowledge of it: for, ſaith he, *Let the word of Chriſt*, that is, chiefly the Goſpel, *Heb.* 2. 3. not excluding other Scriptures: (for the Prophets were inſpired by the Spirit of Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 3. 19 and did alſo write of Chriſt, *Joh* 5. 39. So that whole Scripture is the word of Chriſt:) *and let it dwell in you*: it's a metaphor which ſpeaketh inward receiving of it, and familiar converſing with it; *and let it dwell richly*, or, copiouſly, *in you*. 2. There is that in Scripture, which is ſufficient to make a man compleatly wiſe unto ſalvation, as containing all things neceſſary to be believed, or practiſed, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. for, this is the firſt fruit to be reaped by the ſtudy of Scripture, it affordeth all wiſdome; *In all wiſdom.* 3. It is not only the duty of Miniſters, but alſo of private Chriſtians, keeping themſelves within their ſtation, and not uſurping upon the Miniſterial Calling, (*Rom.* 10. 15.) privately to teach and inſtruct, as alſo to admoniſh, and reprove one another: and the knowledge and wiſdom which they draw from Scripture, is to be imployed for this end, next after the advancing of their own ſalvation, and not for vain oſtentation, profane jeſting, or idle jangling, 1 *Tim.* 1. 4. 6. *In all wiſdom, teaching and admoniſhing.* 4. The duties of teaching and admoniſhing among private Chriſtians, ought to be mutual; there being none ſo compleat for knowledge, ſo ſtreight in his practice, but he ſtandeth in need to have thoſe duties performed ſometimes to him by others; *admoniſhing one another.* 5. Singing to God with the voice, is a profitable Ordinance of Gods Wor-

ſhip

ſhip under the Goſpel; as not only holding forth that which the Word read doth, but alſo ſtaying the heart upon the ſweet and lively meditation of the matter which we ſing, and is moſt natively directed to the glorifying of God, as its proper and immediate ſcope: *ſinging, &c.* 6. The Pſalms of *David*, and other ſcriptural Songs in the in the old Teſtament, may, and ought to be ſung in this part of Goſpel-worſhip: for, ſaith he, *in pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging, &c.* or rather, *ſinging in pſalms, hymns, &c.* for ſo the words may be rendered: now all agree that hereby are deſigned the Pſalms of *David*, and other ſcriptural Songs, though there be ſome difference about the kind of Songs, which are intended to be expreſſed by every one of thoſe in particular. 7. That this piece of Goſpel-worſhip may be gone about acceptably, Firſt, Our Songs would be ſpiritual, and this not only for the matter, but becauſe of the aſſiſtance of Gods Spirit, and of a ſpiritual frame of heart which is required for ſinging aright, *Eph.* 5. 18, 19. Secondly, They would carry with them a kind of delectable edification to the hearers, as being ſung with grave and melodious tones, and ſo, as the matter which is ſung may be underſtood by others, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. This is *to ſing with grace*, or, in a delicious and edifying ſtrain, ſo is the word taken, chap. 4. v. 6. Thirdly, Except the heart and inward affection be ſtirring in this duty; the outward grace, and delectation, which is in it, ſerveth for no purpoſe: *ſinging in your hearts.* Fourthly, In ſinging, the heart ought to be taken up immediatly with the thoughts of praiſe unto God, ariſing from the conſideration of the matter, which will alwayes furniſh a heart rightly diſpoſed with ſome thoughts of that kind: *ſinging in your hearts to the Lord.*

Verſ. 17. *And whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

He giveth a common rule for all our actions, that they be

undertaken in Chriſt's Name, and that thanks be given to God the Father through Chriſt for the event or ſucceſſe of them. *Doct.* 1. Chriſtians are not left to their liberty, neither in things neceſſary, nor yet altogether in things of their own nature indifferent, neither in their words nor deeds, nor yet their thoughts (for thoſe are deeds or actions of the mind and inward man) to do as they pleaſe in them; but are tied to walk by a rule: and particularly they are to be ruled by Chriſt's command, with in-calling of his help, and aiming at his glory in what they do; for, *doing in his Name*, importeth all thoſe three, *Matth.* 18. 20. *Luke* 10.17. *Pſal.*31. 3. and however it be impoſſible to have an actual purpoſe to glorifie him, and imploy his help actually for every thought, word and deed; yet the heart would be habitually inclined to do all things in his ſtrength, and for him; and in ſolemn and weighty actions there ought to be an actuall purpoſe of this kind; *And whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jeſus.* 2. They who do all things in Chriſt's Name, will have ſtill abundant matter of thankſgiving to God in thecloſe of their action, whatever be the event; *do all things in the Name, &c. giving thanks.* 3. We ought to acknowledge thankfully our obligation to God for the ſucceſſe and event of our lawful undertakings, Not ſacrificing to our own net, or burning incenſe to our own drag, *Hab.* 1. 16. *Giving thanks to God, and the Father*, or God, who is the Father: (ſee upon chap. 1. ver.3.) which excludeth not the other two perſons; but the Father being the fountain of the Deity, from whom, as the prime author, all good things are derived to us, by mediation of the Son, the holy Spirit working them in us: Therefore, that the order both of nature, and of operation may be pointed at, for the moſt part we expreſſe the Father both in our prayers and praiſes, not excluding the other two perſons. 4. There is no addreſs to the Father in any duty whether of prayer or praiſe, ſo, as to be born through, or accepted in it, but through Jeſus Chriſt: *giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.*

Ver.

Verſ. 18. *Wives, ſubmit your ſelves unto your own huſbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

In the ſecond part of the chapter, from this verſe to the end, he treateth of theſe duties which relate to Chriſtians, as they are members of a family; and as there are in every compleat family three pairs, to wit, Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants; whereof the latter is alwayes inferiour to the former: ſo he points at the duty of each of thoſe, and ſtill beginneth with the inferiour firſt, becauſe their duty, through the ſubjection which is in it, is more difficile, and being made conſcience of, is a ſtrong motive unto the ſuperiour to go about his duty alſo: and firſt he preſſeth upon wives their duty, to wit, ſubjection to their husbands, from the conveniency of it; and qualifieth their ſubjection, that it be *in the Lord*. *Doct.* 1. It is not ſufficient for Chriſtians to go about general and common duties of Chriſtianity, but thoſe other duties which belong to them as being in ſuch a ſtate of life, to wit, as Magiſtrates, Miniſters, Husbands, Wives, &c. muſt be in a ſpecial manner made conſcience of: for, the Apoſtle having exhorted unto thoſe common vertues, doth now preſſe ſuch duties as concern Chriſtians in their particular vocations: *Wives, ſubmit your ſelves, &c.* 2. It is much for the advantage of Religion, that particular families be well ordered, the whole Church being made up of thoſe; hence he preſſeth much thoſe duties which belong unto Chriſtians, as they are members of families; *Wives, ſubmit your ſelves, &c.* 3. The ſum of a Wives duty unto her Husband, is, ſubjection, which comprehendeth a reverend eſteem of him, *Eph.* 5. 33. reſpective ſpeaking of him, and to him, 1 *Pet.* 3. 6. and obedience to him in things lawful, 1 *Pet.* 3. 5, 6. *Wives, ſubmit*, or, *ſubject your ſelves.* 4. However a womans own husband may come far ſhort of others in parts, gifts, and every other thing which deſerveth reverence and ſubjection, 1 *Sam.* 25.

25. 17. yet becauſe of the Ordinance of God, and that peace may be kept betwixt man & wife, ſhe is to ſubmit to her own husband, reſpecting none ſo much as him, depending upon none, and following the counſel and direction of none ſo much as his; for ſo the Apoſtle commands, *Submit unto your own huſbands.* 5. Whether we conſider the Ordinance of God injoyning, or the infirmity of the woman, as being of the weaker ſex, or the great inconveniency of jealouſie, hatred and ſtrife which followeth upon the denying of this ſubjection, it will be found moſt convenient, equitable and juſt, that *Wives be ſubject unto their huſbands, as it is fit.* 6. The ſubjection which a wife doth owe unto her husband, is in the Lord Chriſt, ſo that in the firſt place ſhe is to ſubject her ſelf to Chriſt, and from love unto him, to ſubject her ſelf to her husband; whence it will follow, that ſhe is to obey him only in things lawful, and to look upon her ſubjection as ſervice done unto Chriſt, which may give her comfort againſt an unkind return from her husband: for, he ſaith, *as it is fit in the Lord.*

Verſ. 19. *Huſbands, love your wives, and be not bitter againſt them.*

He exhorteth husbands to love their wives, as the ſum and fountain of all other duties which they owe unto them, and forbiddeth bitterneſſe towards them. *Doct.* 1. As the Lord hath not tied inferiours to their duty, leaving ſuperiours at liberty to do what they will in theirs; So the mutual diſcharge of duty betwixt ſuperiours and inferiours, man and wife, parent and children, maſter and ſervant, is a great incouragement for every one to ſet about their own duty, as having not only the command of God for it, but an anſwerable return from thoſe to whom they do that duty; hence, having preſſed upon wives their duty, he doth the like unto the husbands, and ſo in the reſt: *Huſbands, love your wives.* 2. The ſum of an husbands duty towards his wife, is, to love her: there ought

ought to be love in affection, and that moſt ardent, *Eph.* 5. 25. and love kything in its effects, ſo as that he delight to dwell with her, *Pro.* 5. 18, 19. ſo, as that he lovingly direct and inſtruct her, 1 *Cor.* 14. 35. and ſo, as he provide for her in all things according to his power, which either her neceſſity, or dignity of her rank doth call for, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. *Huſbands, love your wives.* 3. Bitterneſſe in huſbands towards their wives is a ſin to be eſchewed much: he is to eſchew bitterneſſe in his affections, ſo as not to hate her, or cold-rifely to love her, *Eph.* 5. 29. bitterneſſe in words, ſo as not for light cauſes to upbraid her, or ſpeak contumelioufly of her, *Pro.* 5. 18. And moſt of all, bitterneſſe in deeds, which conſiſts in giving her little or no truſt in the family, *Pro.* 31. 15. and with-holding from her things neceſſary for her ſupply, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. and in beating her, which is contrary both to the Law of God (*Eph.* 5. 29.) and Nature, ſo that very Heathens did abhor it: *be not bitter againſt them.* It's a word taken from unſavory meats, pointing that his converſation in all things ſhould be delicious, ſweet, and meek.

Verſ. 20. *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord.*

He commandeth children (under which, according to the Scripture-phraſe, are comprehended ſons and daughters in law, &c. *Ruth* 1, 11, 12.) *to obey their parents in all things*, to wit, which are not forbidden by God; and that becauſe hereby they do acceptable ſervice to God. *Doct.* 1. The ſum of childrens duty towards their parents, is obedience: the Greek word ſignifieth obedience flowing from inward reſpect and reverence, which is to be teſtified by reverent ſpeaking of them, and to them, *Pro.* 30. 17. by giving obedience to their juſt commands, and by thankful recompenſing of them, chiefly if they fall in ſtraits, 1 *Tim.* 5. 4. *Children, obey your parents.* 2. Age, or length of days doth not exempt children from this duty: Children indeed, who are foriſ-familiate, are not

tied

tied to cohabit with parents, and to care for their affairs according to their direction, *Gen.* 2.24. (which children under the care of parents are tied unto, as being members of the family, *Gen.* 37. 12, 13.) but they are bound to reverence their parents, and be thankful to them as their necessity requires: for, the word rendered *Children*, signifieth all who are begotten, whatever be their age: *Children, obey your parents.* 3. The obedience which children owe to parents is of very large extent, even to *all things*, to wit, not forbidden of God, *Eph.* 6. 1. which limitation is insinuated here in the reason of the command, *for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord*: but it extendeth to all other things; as, if the thing commanded be good, or in its own nature indifferent; yea, even their rigid and seemingly unreasonable commands in things indifferent, are not to be disobeyed, (*Gen.* 22. 6.) if they cannot be otherwise diverted: *Obey your parents in all things.* 4. As obedience to parents is very acceptable to God: for, it's injoyned in the first Command with promise, and in the second Table, *Eph.* 6. 2. So, that children may obey their parents aright, it is necessary that their hearts be touched with some reverence towards God, and a desire to please him, which will make them endeavour to please their parents in God, and thereby do service to God: The argument used to inforce obedience, beareth this much; *for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

Vers. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your children* to anger, *lest they be discouraged.*

Because parents are apt to abuse their parental authority, and chiefly the fathers, Therefore he injoyneth them to use it moderately, not irritating their children lest they turn heartless and discouraged. *Doct.* 1. Fathers are so to use their authority over their children, as not to give them just cause of irritation, whether by denying unto them that which is their due in food, raiment, or means of education, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. or by commanding things in themselves unjust, 1 *Sam.* 20. 31, 34. or by unjust and rigorous

rigorous commands about things in their own nature indifferent, or inveighing with bitter words againſt them, chiefly when there is [illegible] cauſe, 1 *Sam.* 20. 30. and laſtly, by beating them either unjuſtly, when there is no fault; or immoderatly, when there is a fault (for juſt and moderate correction is neceſſary, *Pro.* 13. 24.) *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger.* 2. As parents by too much indulgence towards children make them ſluggiſh, petulant, or prophane, *Pro.* 29. 15. So by their immoderate ſeverity, they make them dull to action, heartleſſe and diſcouraged, from whence do flow ſickneſſes, and death; yea, and ſometimes deſperate contumacy: the conſideration whereof ſhould make parents deal more gently with them, though they are alwayes to keep up their fatherly authority: for, this is given as a reaſon of the prohibition, *leſt they be diſcouraged.*

Verſ. 22. *Servants, obey in all things your maſters according to the fleſh; not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſſe of heart, fearing God.*

He entereth here upon the duty of ſervants, whereon he inſiſteth, not only becauſe their condition was moſt hard, as being for the moſt part bought ſlaves; but alſo, it ſeemeth ſeverals of them, under pretence of Chriſtian Liberty, did ſhake off the yoke, their maſters being unconverted Pagans; whereby Satan did labour to make the Goſpel odious: Therefore *Paul* exhorteth them to obey their maſters (who had power over their fleſh and bodies) in all things lawfull: and that not only when their maſters were preſent, as labuoring meerly to pleaſe them, but in ſincerity of heart, as fearing the all-ſeing eye of God. *Doct.* 1. The freedom purchaſed by Chriſt, and offered in the Goſpel, is ſpiritual, to wit, from the condemning power of the Law, *Gal.* 3. 13. from the dominion of ſin, *Rom.* 6. 18. and the legal ceremonies, *Gal.* 2. 4. But it is not bodily: the Goſpel doth not meddle with a mans outward eſtate; as it findes him, whether maſter

Master or Servant, so it leaves him, 1 *Cor.* 7.21: for some of those Colossians were Servants before conversion, and they remain so after conversion: *Servants, &c.* 2. The dominion which Masters have over Servants, is onely in things temporall, and of the flesh; it is not over the conscience; in which respect there is onely one Lord and Master, *Matth.* 23.8. and Law-giver, *James* 4.12. for, they are called *masters according to the flesh*, to denote the extent of their mastership. 3. As the sum of those duties, which servants owe to their masters is, obedience, which supponeth respect and reverence: So, this obedience is of large extent, to wit, to all things not forbidden of God, even their rigid commands are not to be contemned, 1 *Pet.* 2.18. *obey in all things your masters.* 4. When servants seem respective to their masters person, and carefull of what concerneth him, himself being present; or, when they know the thing which they do, will come otherwayes to his knowledge, but at other times are unfaithfull or careless, this is a sin much to be condemned, as evidencing they seek no more but humane approbation, so as if they can get the eyes of men sylored, they regard not the anger of God: for, this is *eye-service* here condemned and he calleth those who are guilty of it, *men-pleasers*: *Not with eye-service as men-pleasers.* 5. Servants ought to serve their Master, and to minde his business *in singlenesse of heart*, that is, whether their master be present or absent; whether their actions come to his knowledge or not, they may be alwayes most seriously affected towards the thriving of his affairs: *In singlenesse of heart.* 6. It is onely the impression of the awe and fear of God upon the heart, which will make a servant minde his masters business thus: Service in singlenesse of heart, is not to be expected from wicked servants, destitute of the fear of God: *but in singlenesse of heart, fearing God.*

Vers.

Vers. 23. *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men:*

He qualifieth the obedience required, that it be hearty and willing, without grudging: because therein they ought to eye God, more than man: for, the negative particle doth not deny simply, but comparatively; so that *as to the Lord, and not to men*, is, to the Lord more than to men, as *Mark* 9. 37. *Doct.* 1. Servants should do their service willingly, carefully, readily and pleasantly; for then do they it from the heart, otherwayes it's neither acceptable to God, nor men: for, though man do not see the heart, yet heart-unwillingness doth kyth in a backward and unpleasant carriage; *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily.* 2. Servants should so go about their duty to men, as therein to look unto God, more than man, by doing it, because God commandeth it, and in the way wherein he doth command it, and in making conscience of their duty to man out of conscience to God, even when masters fail in theirs, 1 *Pet.* 2. 18, 19. And except servants eye God thus, they have but small incouragement otherwayes to do their duty heartily: for he commandeth them to *do as unto the Lord, and not unto men*, in order to make them do heartily.

Vers. 24. *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

That he may excite servants to their duty, he useth some arguments: the first taken from that free retribution of the heavenly Inheritance, which Christ shall give unto those who serve him in their calling, and to believing servants among the rest. *Doct.* 1. There is no calling so mean or base, which is lawfull, and piously gone about, wherein a rich reward is not to be expected from God; even *Servants shall receive the reward.* 2. So

poor

poor is the reward which ſervants have to expect from their Maſters, and what is promiſed, is often ſo ſlightly payed, that for their incouragement, they would caſt their eye frequently upon the reward of this heavenly Inheritance: for, the Apoſtle holdeth it out to be eyed by them, while he ſaith, *of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the inheritance.* 3. In Heaven there is no diſtinction of ſervants and ſons: all are children and heirs who are there; even ſervants *ſhal receive the inheritance* of ſons. 4. Whatever reward is promiſed to any work of ours, it proceedeth not from the worth which is in the work, but from God's free grace, who freely promiſeth; for, *it's the reward of an inheritance*; the word ſignifieth, an inheritance obtained by lot, wherein leaſt of man is ſeen. 5. Promiſes have no influence to excite unto duty, except the truth of them be known and believed: divine Truths are looked upon by many as fanſies; hence there is ſo much preaching of them, and ſo little wrought by them: *Knowing that of the Lord.* 6. As Chriſt will have none to ſerve him for nothing: ſo, the meaneſt ſervice that is, being done with the right qualifications, is ſervice done to Chriſt: for, ſo ſpeaketh he here of ſervants; *ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt*, and hereby aſſureth them of the reward.

Verſ. 25. *But he that doth wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no reſpect of perſons.*

Here is a ſecond argument taken from Gods judgment to come, whether upon Maſters or Servants who do wrong, confirmed from this, that God is no accepter of perſons. *Doct.* 1. Hope of reward is not ſufficient to draw men to their duty, except they be alſo driven to it by the fear of puniſhment: for, ſo much is grounded upon thoſe words, as they ſpeak to Servants, to whom the promiſe was but preſently proponed; *but he that doth wrong, ſhall receive.* 2. So juſt is God, that he will not paſſe by thoſe

thoſe wrongs which are leaſt thought of by men: ſuch are the mutuall injuries of Maſters and Servants: for he, whether Maſter or Servant, *that doth wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong.* 3. The Lord keepeth a proportion betwixt ſins and ſtroaks, ſo that the more wrong a man doth, the ſorer ſhall his puniſhment be, *Heb.* 10.29. *for he ſhall receive his wrong*, that is, a juſt retribution according to his wrong. 4. It is uſuall for people to conceit of ſomewhat in themſelves for reſpect to which they will not be ſo dealt with by God, as others, though they be alike guilty; ſome do thus conceit of their riches, ſome of their poverty, ſome of their parts: ſee *doct.* 1. upon v. 11. For, his vindicating God from having any ſuch reſpect to perſons, imports, that it is uſuall for men to have contrary thoughts of him. 5. There is no ſuch reſpect of perſons with God; he will ſpare none for outward reſpects, as being free of all thoſe baſe paſſions, which make men wreſt judgement for reſpect to perſons: he feareth not the great, he is not prepoſterouſly compaſſionate towards the poor, he coveteth not the gold of the rich, and hath no intereſt divided from that of eternity and juſtice, *Geneſ.* 18. 25. So that *with God* there neither is, nor can be *reſpect of perſons.*

CHAP. IV.

IN the firſt part of this Chapter, the Apoſtle (having ſet down the duty of maſters towards ſervants, v. 1.) exhorteth thoſe Coloſſians unto ſeverall duties, as to prayer, v. 2. and to pray for himſelf in particular, v. 3,4. and to circumſpect walking towards Heathens, v. 5. and to aim at delectable edification in their diſcourſe, v. 6.

In the ſecond part he declareth, why he ſent *Tychicus*

and *Oneſimus* unto them, whom he highly commendeth, v. 7, 8, 9.

In the third part, are, firſt, ſalutations, whereof ſome were ſent to the Coloſſians from three of the Circumciſion, who are deſcribed, and commended, v. 10, 11. ſome from their own Miniſter *Epaphras*, whom he highly commendeth, v. 12, 13. ſome from *Luke* and *Demas*, v. 14. and the reſt from *Paul* himſelf to the Laodiceans, v. 15. And ſecondly, ſome directions unto them for uſe-making of this Epiſtle, v. 16. and that they would admoniſh their Miniſter, v. 17. and ſo he puts a cloſe to the Epiſtle, v. 18.

Verſ. 1. *Maſters, give unto your ſervants that which is juſt and equall, knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven.*

THis verſe ſeemeth to be a part of the preceding Chapter, whether we look to the purpoſe which goeth before, or to that which doth follow; wherein he exhorts maſters to give unto their ſervants that which they were obliged, whether by ſtrict Law and condition, or by the Law of charity and chriſtian meekneſſe; and that, becauſe they had a Maſter in Heaven, who would reckon with them if they did otherwayes. *Doct.* 1. Maſters ought to give unto their ſervants that which is *juſt*, that is, what they are tyed unto by the rule of ſtrict juſtice; as firſt, food competent to their ſervice and ſtate, *Prov.* 31. 15. Secondly, their hire, *James* 5. 4. And thirdly, work, wherein they are not to preſſe them rigorouſly, and above their power, *Prov.* 12. 10. nor yet ſuffer them to be altogether idle, *Prov.* 29. 21. for, ſaith he, *Maſters, give unto your ſervants that which is juſt.* *Doct.* 2. They are alſo bound to give unto them that which is *equall*, that is, what they are tyed unto by the rule of charity and chriſtian meekneſſe; as firſt, to ſee that they ſerve God, which is injoyned to Maſters in the fourth Command. Secondly, not to do all with them by boaſt and ter-

terror, as if they were beasts; but to draw them on with meekneſſe, as being of the ſame nature with themſelves, *Eph.6.9.* Thirdly, not to be tyrannicall, by making their will an abſolute rule for them; but to hear them when in modeſtie they produce reaſon to the contrary, *Job* 31.13,14 Fourthly, to have reſpect unto their infirmities, by caring for them when they are ſick, *Matth.8.6.* Yea, and fifthly, to let ſomewhat fall beyond condition unto thoſe who are faithfull, *Prov.14.35.* *Give unto your ſervants that which is equall.* *Doct.* 3. A right to Heaven and the heavenly Inheritance, ought not to prejudge a man in what is due unto him of things worldly: A right unto the one, doth not enervate, but rather eſtabliſheth their right unto the other; and ſo they may without offence ſeek and plead for what is due unto them: Thus notwithſtanding that Heaven is promiſed (chap. 3. v.24.) to godly ſervants, yet maſters are commanded to *give them that which is juſt and equall.* 4. The greater that men are in the world, they ſtand in more need to have the terror of God preſented unto them, that thereby they may be excited to their duty: for, as he proponed a comfortable promiſe unto the poor ſervants, (chap.3. v.24.) ſo he boaſteth maſters with the conſideration of God's greatneſſe, *knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven.* 5. Superiors and maſters ſhould ſo carry themſelves, as remembring they have one above them to call them to an accompt; *knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven.* 6. We would ſo repreſent God unto our ſelves, as may ſerve beſt to reſtrain from ſin, and put us upon our duty: for, to inforce the exhortation, he proponeth God unto them, as their *maſter in heaven*, which ſpeaketh his abſolute dominion, 2 *Chron.*20.6. his omniſcience, *Pſal.*11.4. his holineſſe, *Iſai.*57.15. and his omnipotency, *Pſal.* 115.3. So that their ſin could not be hid from him; his holy nature did hate it, he had both right and power to puniſh it: *ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven.*

Verſ. 2. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thanksgiving.*

He exhorteth unto the exerciſe of prayer, and to ſome conditions required for the right diſcharging of this duty. As firſt, Inſtant and vehement perſevering in it. Secondly, Watchfulneſſe and fervency. Thirdly, Thankfulneſſe. *Doct.* 1. The exerciſe of prayer is neceſſary for the right performance of commanded duties; it being a mean, in the uſe whereof, covenanted ſtrength and influence is conveyed unto us, *Matth.* 7. 7. without which we can do nothing: for, unto the former exhortations, he ſubjoyneth, *Continue in prayer.* 2. We ought to continue and perſevere in this exerciſe, oppoſing all tentations mightily which tend to make us quite it; *Continue in prayer.* The word ſignifieth to continue with ſtrength, ſo as no labour or toil do make us weary, or give it over. Which continuance relateth firſt to the diſpoſition of the heart, being ſtill kept in a fitneſſe to go about that duty, when occaſion offereth; and next to the actual exerciſe it ſelf, that it be ſometimes every day at leaſt gone about, and alwayes, when there is oportunity, though we are not to quite all other duties, that we may be wholly, conſtantly, and only in this, ſee 2 *Sam.* 9. 13. *Doct.* 3. That this exerciſe of prayer be diſcharged aright, watchfulneſſe is required, a watchfulneſſe eſpecially of the mind; & this firſt, before we come to the duty, watching for an opportunity of praying, ſearching out and obſerving thoſe things which may furniſh matter for prayer, as Gods mercies, and our own eſcapes. Secondly, in the duty, that we be intent upon it, our graces kept in exerciſe while we are at it, and what is Gods dealing with the ſoul in it may be obſerved, as if he ſtraiten, give liberty, hide his face, or ſhew himſelf gracious. Thirdly, after the duty, as what anſwers we receive; and leſt we be overtaken either with pride for doing well, or with diſcouragement for our coming ſhort; *And watch in the ſame.*

4.

4. Thankſgiving for favours already received, ought to be joyned with prayer, as a choice argument whereby to plead and prevail for new ones, (*Pſal.* 44. through the whole) yea though we ſhould not prevail for the time, yet we owe thanks in that he hath been ſometimes intreated, and is only delaying now, untill a more fit time, wherein he may give that which is ſought, *Pſal.* 43. 5. *Watch in the ſame with thanksgiving.*

Verſ. 3. *Withall, praying alſo for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to ſpeak the myſterie of Chriſt, for which I am alſo in bonds:*
4. *That I may make it manifeſt, as I ought to ſpeak.*

He recommendeth one particular unto their prayers, to wit, That they would deal with God for him and other faithfull Miniſters; that in that time of perſecution chiefly, wherein he was made a priſoner for Truth, they might be indued with a ſpirit of boldneſſe and freedom in the delivery of their meſſage; the ſubject whereof was moſt precious, as being a myſterie, and a myſterie of Chriſt, and ſo a moſt neceſſary and profitable myſterie, v. 3. And that he might be gifted with plainneſs in preaching, and with all other properties requiſite in an able and faithful Preacher, v. 4. *Doct.* 1. Chriſtians are bound to pray for others aſwell as for themſelves, and chiefly for their Miniſters, and for every one, as they are leſſe or more inſtrumental in the work of Chriſt; ſo *Paul*, who was much imployed in the work of the Goſpel, enjoyneth, *Withall, praying alſo for us.* 2. Thoſe only are fit to pray for others, who are making conſcience to pray for themſelves: for, the Apoſtle, having exhorted them, v. 2. to pray indefinitly, (which certainly containeth principally the duty of every man's praying for himſelf) here ſubjoyneth, *Withall*, and *alſo praying for us.* 3. Whatever a Miniſter be for abilities and graces, it becometh him well to ſeek the help of Gods people committed to his charge, for his further inabling to go

about the duties of his Calling, and eſpecially he is to ſeek the help of their prayers: for, even *Paul* ſeeketh this from thoſe Coloſſians; *Withall, praying alſo for us.* 4. In times of perſecution chiefly, a faithful Miniſter will be more anxious and careful for the thriving of the Goſpel, and work of God, than for his own particular intereſt: If it go well with the Goſpel, come of him what will, he is well; So *Paul* (though lying in bonds) urgeth upon them to pray, not ſo much for his own liberty, as the Goſpels; not that the priſon doors might be open, but *that God would open to them a door of utterance.* 5. Holy boldneſſe and freedom is much to be wiſhed for in a Miniſter; that ſo he may ſpeak all ſeaſonable Truths, *Acts* 20. 27. and to all perſons, 1 *Tim.* 5. 20, 21. and at all times, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. and may ſpeak them as the Truths of God with courage and authority, 1 *King.* 22. 14. This holy boldneſſe and freedom is meant by the *door of utterance*, as the Apoſtle himſelf expoundeth it, *Eph.* 6. 19, 20. *That God would open unto us a door of utterance.* 6. There are many difficulties to be overcome before a man can attain unto this holy boldneſſe, and thoſe ſuch, that only God can remove them: There is a difficulty to find out pertinent matter, and to vent it when it is found; partly, through want of courage; partly, through the ſuſpending ſometimes of divine influence: and there is a difficulty to vent it rightly; that is, firſt, confidently, ariſing either from want of experience, or from an evil conſcience. Secondly, pertinently, through want of prudence. Hence *Paul*, ſpeaking of this holy boldneſſe, uſeth the metaphor of a door, and of a door ſhut until God do open it: *That God would open unto us a door of utterance.* 7. As Chriſt in his Perſon, Natures and Offices, and the Goſpel, which treateth of thoſe, is a myſterie: So Chriſt and the Goſpel ſhould be the main ſubject of a Miniſters preaching: He ought ſo to preach the Law, and preſſe duties, as that the due relation betwixt Chriſt and thoſe may be clearly held forth; Chriſt being the end of the Law for righteouſneſſe, *Rom.* 10. 4. *To ſpeak the myſterie of Chriſt.*

8.

8. Perſecution for the Goſpel, tendeth to the advantage of the Goſpel; the more it is ſuppreſſed, the more it groweth. *Paul* is *in bonds*, and yet he preacheth, *Act.* 26. 29. *Doct.* 9. Then are people chiefly to bear burden with their Miniſters by praying to God for them, when they are under perſecution for the Goſpel: for, *Paul* mentioneth his bonds, as an argument exciting them to pray: *for which I am alſo in bonds.* 10. It is a great part of a Miniſters task, as to preach, ſo to make what he preacheth, plain unto the people, by dimitting himſelf in the whole convey of his purpoſe, for method, (2 *Tim.* 2. 15.) ſtile, (1 *Cor.* 2. 4.) and cloſe application, (2 *Tim.* 4. 2.) ſo far as is poſſible unto the capacitie of the meaneſt; *That I may make it manifeſt*, ſaith he. 11. Beſides this holy boldneſſe and plainneſſe, there are many other things which a Miniſter would advert to in preaching, as that he preach pertinently to the conditions of all, *Iſa.* 50. 4. that he ſpeak affectionatly and with pitty, even to the moſt ſtubborn, *Jer.* 4. 19. and patiently, not wearying for want of ſucceſſe, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. and zealouſly, with indignation againſt ſin, *Iſa.* 58. 1. and frequently, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. and ſelf-deniedly, 2 *Cor.* 4. 5. Theſe, and many other things requiſit, are all ſummed up by *Paul* in this comprehenſive expreſſion, *As I ought to ſpeak.*

Verſ. 5. *Walk in wiſdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

He exhorteth them to wiſe and circumſpect walking, with relation chiefly to the Heathens among whom they did live, who were without the viſible Church; and that in order to this, they ſhould cloſe with every opportunity of doing well, and particularly wherein they might gain any of thoſe Infidels to Chriſt, though with much loſſe to themſelves in things worldly. *Doct.* 1. It is not ſufficient for Chriſtians to pray much, or go about the duties of Gods immediate worſhip, except they alſo ſet about other particular duties of an holy life; So, beſides

prayer, he injoyneth, *walk in wiſdom.* 2. There is great wiſdom required in a Chriſtians carriage towards thoſe who are without, to wit, unconverted Heathens without the Church; and by proportion thoſe who evidence their non-regeneration by a profane life within the Church, (*Tit.* 1.16.) leſt we skar them from Chriſt, giving them occaſion to ſpeak evill of Religion, 1. *Tim.* 5. 14, or we our ſelves be infected by them, 1 *Cor.* 5.6. *Walk in wiſdome towards thoſe who are without.* 3. The loſſe of credit, riches, eaſe, or not coming up to the full extent of our chriſtian liberty, and that which is our right in things worldly, is not to be ſtood upon, rather than we loſe the oportunities of doing good, chiefly of gaining a godleſſe man to Chriſt: for, by the loſſe of theſe things, *we are to redeem the time*, or, oportunity: It's a Metaphor from Merchants, who prefer the leaſt profit that may be to their pleaſures and eaſe, cloſely following their buſineſſe, when the merkats are beſt.

Verſ. 6. *Let your ſpeech be alway with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that ye may know how ye ought to anſwer every man.*

He directeth them how to order their ſpeech and ordinary conference, ſo, as it may alwayes carry along with it delectable edification unto the hearers, being ſeaſoned with the ſalt of holy and divine wiſedome, whereby they ſhould acquire ability and prudence to anſwer pertinently in any thing whereof they ſhould be queſtioned, chiefly about the grounds of Chriſtianitie. *Doct.* 1. We are not left to run at randon in our ordinary diſcourſes, ſo, as to ſpeak idly, *Matth.* 12.36. much leſſe profanely, *Eph.* 4.29. but are at all times, and with all perſons, to have an eye to the good of thoſe with whom we ſpeak, ſo, as both to delight and edifie them by our ſpeech: for, this is to ſpeak *with grace*; ſee *Epheſ.* 4. 29. *Let your ſpeech be alway with grace.* 2. That our ſpeech may be with grace, and ſo both delight and edifie the

the hearers; The ſalt, not of bitter and ſatyrick jeſting, (*Eph.* 5. 4.) but of divine wiſedome, is required, that noyſome, putrifying, and profane diſcourſe may be eſchewed, and what we ſpeak may be ſo ordered upon an exact ſurvey of time, place and company, as it may prove moſt ſavorie and acceptable unto the hearers: for, this is the uſe of ſalt, to extract putrifying humors from meats, and make them delicious to the taſte, fit for digeſtion, and good for nouriſhment; *ſeaſoned with ſalt.* 4. As Chriſtians ſhould endeavor that meaſure of knowledge, whereby they may be inabled to give a reaſon of their faith unto thoſe who ask them: So, it is not ſufficient to anſwer materially to that wherein we are queſtioned, except we anſwer in the right manner alſo, that is, confidently, underſtandingly, reverently and gravely, not jeſtingly: for, he ſaith not, *that ye may know with*, but *how to anſwer.* 5. The habituating of our ſelves to edifying diſcourſe in our ordinary ſtrain, is a profitable mean for growth in knowledge and the through underſtanding of thoſe things which we know: for, the fruit to be reaped by ſpeaking *alway with grace*, is, *that ye may know how ye ought to anſwer every man.*

Verſ. 7. *All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you*, who is *a beloved brother, and a faithfull miniſter, and fellow-ſervant in the Lord:*

8. *Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he might know your eſtate, and comfort your hearts:*

9. *With Oneſimus a faithfull and beloved brother, who is one of you. They ſhall make known unto you all things which* are done *here.*

In the ſecond part of the Chapter, the Apoſtle (having commended *Tychicus* from the eſteem which he had of him, and from his miniſterial calling) ſhoweth, he had ſent him to them, to give them certain information concerning his own caſe, and to return unto him certain information concerning theirs; and that he might prove com-

comfortable unto them by his preſence, preaching, and otherwayes, v. 7,8. And joyneth *Oneſimus* with him in the Commiſſion, whom he alſo commendeth as a faithfull Chriſtian, beloved of *Paul*, and, as it would ſeem, their own countrey-man, v. 9. *Doct.* 1. It concerneth a Miniſter much to be of a good report among, and well-eſteemed of by People; that ſo the Word may be the more readily received from him: for this cauſe, *Paul*, being to ſend *Tychicus* to comfort their hearts, commends him much unto them, as a Chriſtian, whom he himſelf loved dearly, *who is a beloved brother*; as a Miniſter who was faithfull for his Maſter, *a faithfull Miniſter*; as one, whom *Paul* had aſſociated to himſelf ſometimes as a colleague in the work of the Miniſtery, *Acts* 20. 4. *And fellow-ſervant in the Lord.* 2. It is good to be rightly informed of the ſtate of thoſe who are ſufferers for Chriſt; that we may accordingly ſympathize with them, *Heb.* 13. 3. be preparing for the like ſufferings, *Joh.* 15.20. and incouraged by their conſtancie, *Phil.* 1.14. for, *Paul* ſendeth *Tychicus* to inform them of his caſe. 3. The carriage of thoſe who ſuffer for Truth, ought to be ſuch, as they need not be aſhamed who ſhould know of it; *Paul* ſendeth *Tychicus to declare all his ſtate unto them.* 4. Publick and common reports, eſpecially of things at a diſtance, are not much to be truſted: A man may eaſily wrong both himſelf and others, by being too credulous of ſuch: Hence *Paul* ſendeth *Tychicus* to inform them certainly of his caſe; *All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you*, and *whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe.* 5. It concerneth a Miniſter prudently to inquire and ſeek to know the ſtate of thoſe who are committed unto his charge; that he may be thereby directed how to ſpeak to their ſtate: for, *he ſendeth Tychicus to know their eſtate.* 6. The carriage of people ought to be ſuch, as they need not be aſhamed that thoſe who are over them in the Lord, come to the knowledge of it: for, he ſendeth *Tychicus, that he may know their eſtate.* 7. A Chriſtian ſufferer for Truth, ought not to be ſo much taken up with his

his own particular concernment, as not to be affected with the tryals and ſufferings of others, though poſſibly they be much lighter than his own; So *Paul*, though now in bonds, ſendeth *Tychicus* to ſtrengthen and comfort thoſe Coloſſians under their preſent tryall, from the falſe teachers; *and comfort your hearts.* 8. As true grace will bring a man to eſteem and credit, chiefly with thoſe who themſelves are gracious, and ſometimes with others alſo: for, it cutteth off thoſe vices which make men contemptible, and adorneth with the contrary vertues: So, where true grace is, it will make a man reckon intereſt in all thoſe who have grace, and teſtifie his affection unto them, whatever hath been their carriage formerly, and notwithſtanding of any preſent diſparity which may be among them otherwayes: for, here *Oneſimus*, whom many take to be the ſame who is mentioned in the Epiſtle to *Philemon*, and ſo was once a fugitive ſervant, is now, being converted, intruſted with an honorable Commiſſion, and is owned by this eminent Apoſtle, as his beloved brother; *with Oneſimus a faithfull and beloved brother.* 9. Though grace in a perſon be the main thing which ſhould commend him to us; yet other naturall and civill relations, ought to have their own deſerved weight: Grace doth not diſſolve ſuch bonds, but rather ſtrengtheneth them; So *Paul* commendeth *Oneſimus* unto them from this, that he *was one of them.*

Verſ. 10. *Ariſtarchus my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth you, and Marcus ſiſters ſonne to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him)*

11. *And Jeſus, which is called Juſtus, who are of the circumciſion. Theſe onely are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.*

Here are ſalutations ſent to the Church at Coloſſe, by three of thoſe who were in *Paul's* company, and they are deſcri-

deſcribed, firſt, ſeverally from their reſpective names and other adjuncts; next joyntly from their Nation, they were Jews; from their pains in promoving the Goſpel; and from their uſefulneſſe to *Paul* himſelf. *Doct.* 1. Diſtance of place ſhould not cool thoſe affections of love and good-will, which ought to be among Chriſtians: for, thoſe ſalutations were outward expreſſions of their inward love, and they do ſalute, though at a diſtance. 2. As little mercy is to be expected from perſecuters; So, the croſſe of Chriſt, and ſuffering for Truth, is a thing not to be aſhamed of: for, *Paul*, as it were, glorieth in the ſtyle of *Priſoner*, though he was uſed as a captive ſlave: *Ariſtarchus my fellow-priſoner*: the word ſignifieth, a captive of war. 3. As reall friendſhip doth not expire with proſperity; So, the ſharpeſt ſufferings of God's people, have ſome ſweet ingredient in them: for, *Paul* hath a fellow with him while he is priſoner, even *Ariſtarchus*, who was his companion in travels, *Acts* 19.2. and 20.v.4. and now doth not quit him in his ſufferings: *Ariſtarchus my fellow-priſoner*. 4. Such love and reſpect ſhould be had to thoſe who are faithfull Inſtruments in the Church of God, that even thoſe who have relation to them, ought to be the more reſpected, chiefly, if they walk in their ſteps; So, *Mark* is commended from this, that he *was ſiſters ſon to Barnabas*, who was ſeparated for the work of God, *Acts* 13. 3. 5. Notwithſtanding a man hath fallen, to the grief and ſcandall of others; yet, after evidences given of his amendment, he ought to be received and converſed with as formerly; So *Mark*, otherwayes called *John*, did deſert *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Acts* 13. 13. whereupon aroſe that hot contention betwixt thoſe two Apoſtles, *Acts* 15. 37. But now having given proof of his remorſe for what he did, he is recommended by *Paul* to thoſe Coloſſians: *Touching whom ye have received commandments, if he come unto you, receive him.* 6. As folk ſhould not follow the multitude of the kinde, from whom they are deſcended, in an evill courſe; So this tendeth much to a man's commendation, when he

he breaks off his evill kinde, and is not carryed away with them: for, thoſe three were of the Jews, a people for the moſt part, enemies to the Goſpel, *Rom.* 11. 28. *who are of the circumciſion*, which is mentioned for their commendation, that though they were Jews, yet they had become Chriſtians, and companions of *Paul* under his affliction. 7. There is no way which leadeth to the Kingdom of Glory, but that which is held forth in the Goſpel, *Acts* 4.12. And Chriſt doth rule in the world by the Goſpel, ſubduing thereby the hearts of men to live by his Laws (*Pſal.* 110.3.) written in the Goſpel, *Rom.* 2. 16. and exerciſing Government and Diſcipline in his viſible Courts, according to the Rules preſcribed by the Goſpel, *Matth.* 18.17,18. Therefore the Goſpel in this place is called the Kingdom of God, See *Matth.*4.23. *Mark.* 4. 11. *Fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God.* 8. This maketh much unto a man's commendation, when he hath any hand in the promoving of this Kingdom, and eſpecially when his diſcouragements are many, and incouragements few, from the example of others who ſhould joyn with him in that work, and do it not: for, they are commended from this, that they onely of the circumciſion were *Paul's fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God.* 9. It appeareth hence how ſmall ground there is for the Pope's pretended ſupremacie and head-ſhip over the Church; the main Pillar whereof, is, that becauſe *Peter* was Biſhop at Rome, therefore the Pope muſt be his ſucceſſor: now, beſide that, they can never prove *Peter* to have been Head of the Church, it is certain that he was not at Rome, when *Paul* wrote this Epiſtle, there being onely there then thoſe three of the circumciſion, *who were his fellow-labourers unto the Kingdom of God*: Neither is there any word in Scripture to prove, that ever *Peter* was at Rome, but much to the contrary. 10. The moſt eminent ſervants of God in time of perſecution, have need of comfort, incouragement and up-ſtirring: ſo ready are the beſt to faint in the hour of temptation, *Dan.* 11.35. but

God

God in mercy, doth not ſuffer them to be deſtitute of ſome, who are comfortable and incouraging unto them, when their neceſſity calleth for it: for, ſaith he, *Which have been a comfort to me:* The word ſignifieth, they had been for comfort, counſell or incouragement unto him; which ſupponeth, that even *Paul* had need of thoſe ſomtimes. 11. As moſt eminent Chriſtians are ready to acknowledge, with thankfulneſſe, how ſteadable any are made unto them in their ſuffering caſe; So it is matter of no ſmall commendation, to be in any meaſure helpfull, by counſell, advice, incouragement, or comfort unto thoſe who are ſuffering for Chriſt, and any part of his Truth: for, herein are thoſe three commended, that they had *been a comfort unto Paul*, as is acknowledged by himſelf.

Verſ. 12. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a ſervant of Chriſt, ſaluteth you, alwayes labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may ſtand perfect, and compleat in all the will of God.*

Here are ſalutations directed from *Epaphras*, who is deſcribed from his Countrey, his Office of the Miniſterie, and his affection to thoſe Coloſſians, teſtified by his fervent and conſtant praying to God for them, that they might be gifted with perſeverance in univerſall, ſincere and hearty obedience to the will of God. *Doct.* 1. A Miniſter ought not to omit any duty of civility, tending to keep a good underſtanding betwixt him and his flock: for, *Epaphras*, who was their Miniſter, (chap. 1. v. 7.) *ſaluteth them.* 2. The power of a call from God and his People, ought to make a man venture upon apparent inconveniences, which otherwayes he were obliged to eſchew: for, *Epaphras* their own Countreyman, had imbraced a call to the Miniſtery among thoſe Coloſſians; though Chriſt ſhoweth, a Miniſter is in hazard to meet with diſ-reſpect in his own Countrey, *Joh.* 4. 44. *who is one of you.* 3. As it is the duty of a Miniſter, not only

ly to preach unto, pray with; but alſo to pray for his flock, and that alwayes when opportunity offereth: So, an honeſt Miniſter, who maketh conſcience of this duty in earneſt, will finde it to be no eaſie task, conſidering how indiſpoſed he is ſometimes to pray for himſelf, *Matth.* 26. 40. and how many in the flock pray not for themſelves, *Matth.* 13. 47. &c. and ſo are an heavy burden unto any who would pray for them; and how many they are alſo, concerning whom God will not be be intreated, *Matth.* 22. 14. Thus *Epaphras was alwayes labouring fervently for them in prayer.* The word ſignifieth, to be ſtriving in a battell, and in an agony for them. 4. A Miniſter ought not to reſt ſatisfied, that he himſelf preacheth Truth plainly, or that the people committed to his charge, attain thereby to the knowledge of Truth; but practice and obedience to the will of God ſo known, muſt be added, together with perſeverance and conſtancie in their begun obedience, leſt by their falling away, they loſe themſelves, and diſgrace the Truth: for, he prayeth that they *might ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.* 5. It is neither the pains of a Miniſter, nor reſolution of a people, *Rom.* 9. 16. but the power of God, which worketh conſtancie in the way of holineſſe, againſt the ſtormy blaſts of ſeverall temptations: for, *Epaphras prayeth unto God for it, that they may ſtand perfect and compleat in the will of God.* 6. Approven obedience to the will of God, and that which is to be aimed at, is that, which is, 1. *perfect*, to wit, with a perfection of parts, or ſincere, and not hypocriticall; *that ye may ſtand perfect.* 2. Hearty and willing, the affections being, as it were, filled with, and carried on by the command; *and compleat*, or, filled. It's a Metaphor from ſails filled with winde. 3. Univerſall, as having reſpect unto all the Commandments; *In all the will of God.*

Verſ.

Vers. 13. *For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.*

He confirmeth by his own testimony, what he presently spoke concerning the zeal, or, fervent and burning care (for so the word signifieth) which *Epaphras* had of them and their neighbouring Churches. *Doct.* 1. Men in place and eminencie, are bound to give a testimony to the graces and gifts of any whom they know to be deserving; that so the person of whom they testifie, may be in better capacity to do good unto others, with whom such a testimony will have weight: for, *Paul* giveth as it were a testimonial unto *Epaphras, I bear him record, &c.* 2. It's a great part of a Minister's commendation, that, he be zealous or fervently carefull for the spirituall good of his flock; So Paul *beareth record, that Epaphras had a great zeal for these Colossians*, the people of his charge, chap. 1. v. 7. 3. A Minister's zeal ought to be extended towards others of Christ's Members, than those of his proper charge, and chiefly unto those Churches which ly neareſt unto him, as being in a neerer capacitie by their good or evill example, to advance or retard the work of God among his own flock: So, Paul *beareth record, that Epaphras had a great zeal for those in Laodicea, and Hierapolis*, which were neighbouring Churches.

Vers. 14. *Luke the beloved Physician, and Demas greet you.*

Here are some salutations sent from *Luke* and *Demas*. *Doct.* 1. As Christ, when he is about to supply his Church with a Ministery, will take men of any calling, whom he pleaseth to choose, and make them Ministers: So, worldly advantage is not to be stood upon when Christ calleth: for, *Luke*, the same, as it seemeth, who wrote the Gospel, was before a Physician, and had now become

become a Minister; though his former calling would have advantaged him more, chiefly at those times when Civill Authority did allow no maintenance for Ministers; *Luke the beloved Physician.* 2. Men in place chiefly, should lay out their love and respect so wisely, that it may tend to a man's commendation to be respected by them, as being known to lay out their affection upon none but such as are worthy of it; So *Paul* calleth *Luke, beloved,* to wit, by him, that hereby he may commend him to them; *Luke the beloved Physician,* 3. There are many fair Professors within the Visible Church, who may afterwards turn Apostats, who so long as they keep the mask of a Profession, will not be behind with the best in externall duties, yea, and often do out-strip others: for, this *Demas,* (whom many take to be the same who is spoken of, 2 *Tim.* 4.10. to have turned Apostate, and as some write, an Idolatrous Priest) is here among the first in saluting those Colossians: *And Demas greet you.* 4. Though judicious Ministers may have their own fears, concerning such fore-mentioned Professors; yet so long as they continue in the externall duties of Christianity, they ought to give unto them that outward respect which is given unto others: but withall, Ministers would be sparing to ingage much in the commendation of any, whom they have ground to suspect will prove such, untill time try what they are: for, *Paul* writeth the salutation of *Demas* among the rest, though it is like he had his own fears concerning him; for, he commendeth him not as he did the rest; *And Demas greet you.*

Vers. 15. *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the Church which is in his house.*

The Apostle directs them to salute in his name, the Christians at Laodicea, that so they might be prepared to hear this Epistle with greater attention: And above all the rest he saluteth one. *Nymphas* (a man eminent for

piety) and the Church at his houſe; whereby may be meant both a Congregation of Chriſtians, to whom he had given his houſe for a place of publick aſſembling to Divine Worſhip; As alſo, his own Family, who were piouſly inſtructed, and orderly governed, as if they had been a Church. *Doct.* 1. People are not ſo to make uſe of the reſpect and affection which a publick Miniſter carryeth unto them, as to make others equally deſerving, jealous of him, as if he did carry no ſuch reſpect unto them: for, the Apoſtle imployeth thoſe Coloſſians, *to ſalute* in his name *the brethren which were in Laodicea*, as if he had ſaid, Let them know, I carry the ſame reſpect unto them, which I carry unto you. 2. However a Miniſter be tyed to reſpect all the Members of the Church, and to evidence ſo much, by diſcharging all common duties towards them; yet he is bound to put ſome more reſpect upon thoſe who are more eminent for piety among them; that ſo by his countenancing the appearances of piety, he may make it the more deſirable and lovely: for, *Paul ſaluteth Nymphas* in particular. 3. As the Primitive Church had not the countenance of Civill Authoritie to provide, upon the Publick expence, places for the Congregation to meet, and publick maintenance for Miniſters: So, ſuch was the fervor of love to the Goſpel then, that private Chriſtians did contribute largely and freely for the up-holding of it: Charity did move to give more then, than force of Law can now: for, *Nymphas* gives his houſe to be a publick Place of meeting for the Church: *and the Church at his houſe*. 4. Maſters of Families ſhould ſo train up their houſhold, in the exerciſe of Divine Worſhip, and in a godly converſation, by inſtructing the ignorant, 1 *Cor.* 14. 35. rebuking and cenſuring the diſobedient and profane, *Pſal.* 101. 7. and by diſcharging all duties of worſhip, competent to the Maſter of a Family, and cauſing his Family to joyn with him, *Joſh.* 24. -- 15. that they may deſerve the name of a Church: So much is imported by thoſe

thoſe words, *the Church at his houſe*, as they contain a deſignation of his Family.

Verſ. 16. *And when this Epiſtle is read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the church of the Laodiceans: and that ye likewiſe read the Epiſtle from Laodicea.*

He directeth them, that, after they have read this Epiſtle themſelves, they would cauſe it be read in the Church of the Laodiceans, who, being their neighbours, were infeſted with the ſame errors; And that ſome other Epiſtle, written from Laodicea, either from the whole Church, or from their Miniſters, as it ſeemeth unto *Paul*, informing him of their caſe, ſhould be read by the Coloſſians, for better clearing of ſome paſſages in this Epiſtle. *Doct.* 1. As Scripture is to be read and peruſed even by private Chriſtians; ſo, the doctrine contained in Scripture, even that which is expreſſely directed to ſome particular Churches or perſons, is of univerſall uſe unto all others: Thus they are commanded, having read this Epiſtle themſelves, to cauſe read it in the Church of Laodicea, as being uſefull for them alſo. 2. The helps of other mens writings, may, and ſhould be made uſe of for the better underſtanding of Scripture: for, this Epiſtle from Laodicea, was not written by *Paul* himſelf, who had never been there, chap. 2. v. 1. but by the Laodiceans themſelves: and *Paul* will have it read for the further clearing of this Epiſtle, which was written by himſelfe: *And that ye likewiſe read the Epiſtle from Laodicea.*

Verſ. 17. *And ſay to Archippus, Take heed to the miniſterie which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.*

He directeth them to admoniſh their Miniſter *Archippus*, (who in the abſence of his Collegue *Epaphras* had the more burden, and it ſeemeth, had fallen ſomewhat

ſlack) both to conſider the nature and weight of the Miniſteriall charge with which he was intruſted by Chriſt, and that he would faithfully diſcharge all the parts of it. *Doct.* 1. There is no ground from this Scripture, for placing a power of juriſdiction in People over their Miniſters, to call them to a judiciall accompt, and to inflict the cenſures of the Church upon them: for, all that is here ſaid, inferreth no more than an admonition from charity, which any private Chriſtian might have given to their Miniſter, and not an authoritative cenſure or rebuke: *Paul* ſpeaketh otherwayes, when he would eſtabliſh any power of that kinde; As 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Charge them that are rich, &c.* but here onely, *Say unto Archippus.* 2. As the beſt of Miniſters are ready to fall ſlack in their duty, and have need of up-ſtirring, they have ſo much to do, 2 *Cor.* 2.-- 16. and for the moſt part ſee ſo ſmall fruits of what they do, *Iſai.* 49. 4. So it is the duty of people to have an eye upon their Miniſter, how he diſchargeth his Office, and when they ſee a fault in him, to tell himſelf of it, admoniſhing him for it: but withall, they would do this in love, and ſo, as they may evidence all due reſpect, both to his Perſon and Function: for, he directeth them to *Say unto Archippus, take heed to thy miniſtery*, and not back-bite or rail upon *Archippus.* 3. That a man may conſcientiouſly go about his calling, he would know the nature of ſuch a Charge, and what it requireth: Particularly a Miniſter would know; Firſt, that his Calling is a *Miniſtery*, a laborious ſervice, or a working, as it were, through duſt and myre: for, ſo the word ſignifieth. And ſecondly, that however the deſignation of the perſon unto the Miniſtery be from man, *Acts* 6. 3. and 14. 23. yet the Office it ſelf is from Jeſus Chriſt, to whom he muſt be countable for his carriage in it: for, ſaith he, *Say unto Archippus, take heed to thy miniſtery, which thou haſt received in the Lord.* *Doct.* 4. It is not ſufficient for any man, chiefly for a Miniſter, to know the nature of his Calling, and what it doth require, unleſſe alſo he make con-

conſcience to diſcharge it when it is known, and to diſcharge all the parts of it, that ſo he may fulfill it; *that thou fulfill it*: ſo were they to ſay to *Archippus*.

Verſ. 18. *The ſalutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.*

This verſe containeth the concluſion of the Epiſtle, which he ſheweth, was written with his own hand, and not by a Secretary, as the reſt of the Epiſtle was: And in it, having ſaluted them, he craveth, they would remember his bonds, and wiſheth unto them God's grace and favour, with all ſpirituall benefits flowing from it. *Doct.* 1. Satan's malice, and man's impudence, did come to that hight, even while the Apoſtles themſelves were alive, as to endeavour the corrupting of Scripture, by calling that Scripture which was not: for, to prevent ſuch impoſtures, *Paul* writeth the ſalutation with his own hand, that the Epiſtle may be known to be his, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 17. *The ſalutation by the hand of me Paul.* 2. God hath ſufficiently provided in his Word, againſt the fore-mentioned evill, by putting ſuch marks upon Scripture, as may be a clear difference betwixt it and all humane writings; *Paul's* own hand-writing did ſerve for ſuch a mark in his Epiſtles; *The ſalutation by the hand of me* Paul: And though this mark doth not extend unto all Scripture, neither can it give faith now, the firſt Copy of his Epiſtles being loſt; yet there are other marks or arguments taken from Scripture, whereby it doth ſufficiently evidence it ſelf to be the Word of God, as the conſent of all its parts, though written at diverſe times, and by ſeverall hands; the fulfilling of its prophecies; the majeſtie and ſimplicity of the ſtyle; the power of its doctrine, &c. 3. As the moſt eminent ſervants of Chriſt may be put to perſonall ſufferings for Truth; So, it is the duty of all Chriſtians to remember them under their ſufferings, ſo as to pray to God for them, v. 2, 3. to ſee the worth of Truth, for

for which they suffer, in their resolute under-going of the crosse, and suffering for it, *Acts* 21. 13. so as to fore-arm themselves for the like sufferings, *Joh.* 15. 20. and to supply them also in their outward necessities, *Phil.* 4. 14. In order to all those, it seemeth, *Paul* hath desired them to *remember his bonds.* 4. Though Christians may use an ordinary form of words in saluting of, and expressing their best wishes unto those with whom they converse; yet they ought to be reall, and not formall onely in using of it, as understanding what they wish, and being affectionate and sincere in their wish: for, *Paul* doth affix his *Amen* unto his ordinary farewell wish: *Grace be with you. Amen.*

FINIS.